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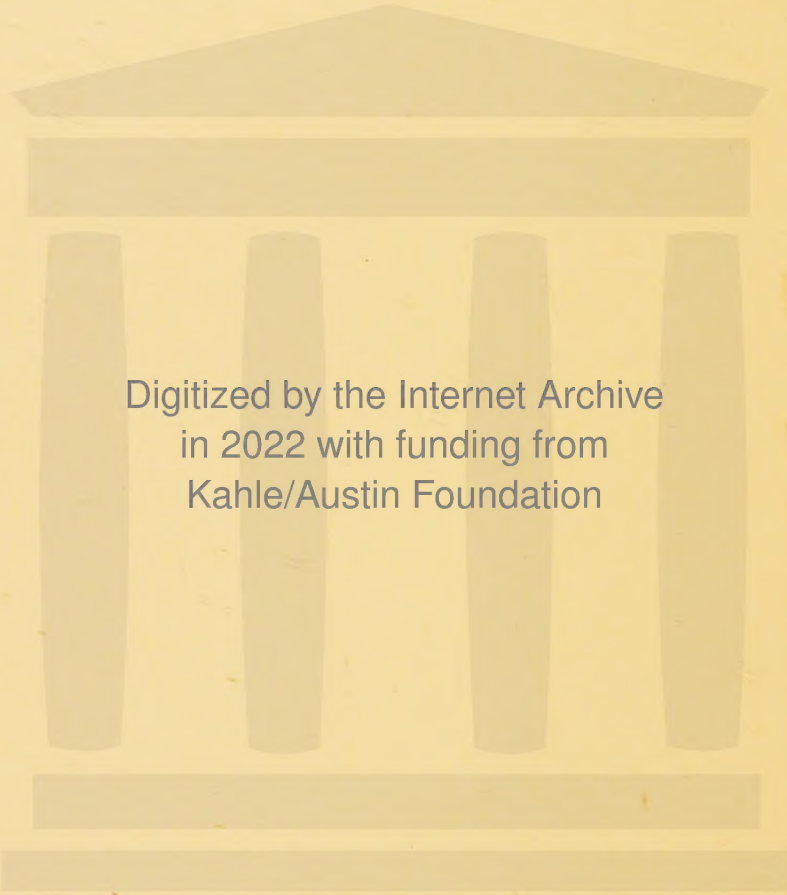
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THE WAYS OF THE
LONELY ONES

THE WAYS OF THE LONELY ONES

A COLLECTION OF MYSTICAL
ALLEGORIES

BY
MANLY HALL

Illustrated by
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INTRODUCTION



HIS life is not merely what it seems to be. Hidden from our eyes by the cloak of materiality is a wonderful world which only the eyes of the dreamer can see and the soul of the mystic comprehend. The stony walls of conventionalized thought and commercialized ideals shut from the view life's noble path. But as the ages pass, some see the greatness of the Divine Plan and comprehend the glorious destiny of the human soul. Sorrow, suffering, and loneliness are the great builders of character. Man never becomes truly great until his heart is broken. That is the supreme test. Those who are deepened and broadened by their experiences rise triumphant from the ruins of their dreams and pass on to fuller destiny.

There are theories which appeal to the reason, and there are truths which the mind can never know. Through the ages the emotion and intellect have struggled with each other for

dominion over the soul and man has foolishly allowed his servants to become his masters.

Religion is not merely intellectual—although it must be logical and reasonable. Religion, in order to unfold the spiritual nature, must be enshrined within the heart.

Every individual who comes into the world is a Lonely One—a stranger in a strange land. At birth he begins a search which continues until he is laid away in death—and probably afterwards. Few can define the object they seek. If they only realized one thing, the quest would be ended—each searches for himself.

We live in a world of shadows. These phantoms are our not-selves, but most of us mistake them for the real Self. Only ages of sorrow and suffering can bring that discrimination which shows us what is really worth while, and develops that determination which strengthens us for the attainment of the greatest good.

DEDICATION

*To that band of Silent Workers—
known in this world as the Lords of
Compassion and the Brothers of the
Shining Robe,—who labor eternally
with the Children of Men in the
name of the Great Father, this vol-
ume is dedicated by the author that
it may bear witness to the spiritual
truths which they serve.*

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NATURE'S HOMAGE

WITH the absorbing power of quicksilver, civilization dissolves into itself the wild places of the earth. Where great forests once stood, gloomy buildings with high angular chimneys now darken narrow cobbled ways. Natural grandeur has been swallowed up in the sordidness of human construction. Here and there, however, spots may yet be found where man has not encroached—where the sound of ax, the cries of woodmen and the rumbling of logs have not broken the primeval stillness. One by one the savage denizens of the wild, the beasts untamed, have retreated into these scarce-trodden fastnesses before the deadly onslaught of civilization. From lonely crag and primeval wilderness they gaze out with furtive eyes and watch the relentless advance of that dread power which would destroy their lives.

In a certain land there is a majestic mountain range which lifts its towering peaks, with their rough and densely wooded sides, like great supplicating arms to the skies. From out the verdant luxuriance of trees and shrubs mighty straggling monarchs of the forest toss high their branches as though to grasp in their trembling fingers the clouds that hover over them. A narrow trail, barely a footpath, winds up to these mountains. Here and there it leads over loose rocks and broken boulders or from stone to stone across some waterfall that descends like a stream of crystal from the snow-covered peaks

far above. In that wood there is no silence for there is ever a rippling, ever a swishing, ever a sighing, as from the mountain sides there trickle numberless streams or through the tree tops the wind whispers its message to any listening ear.

Up this narrow path climbs an occasional hunter, for the fleet-footed deer still peer shyly out of the thickets, springing from rock to rock or darting among the scrub growth that clothes the precipitous slopes on either hand. Here, too, the mountain lion lurks, and at night its shining eyes gaze out from the darkness at the campfire of the hunter. Here also the wolf and fox abound and in the lower valleys prowls the jackal, yapping an incessant protest as the shades of evening gather. Mayhap an awkward bear crosses the path and waddles along on his short, ungainly legs. It is the paradise of the sportsman, who slays to prove the merit of his aim.

Many stories are told of these mountains, many legends fashioned by the minds of ancient dreamers and perpetuated by their descendants. But strangest of all is the story of the Old Man of the Mountain.

Somewhere in the fastnesses of these hills, so the story goes, lived a hermit who had dwelt there for many years. As far back as the oldest hunters could remember, the story was told of how one, tired of the world and its shams, had crept away from the haunts of men to make his domicile among the crags of these mountains whose lofty peaks touched the sky. Once in a great while someone saw him far off in the distance as, motionless, he stood on the shore of some mountain lake or walked slowly along the brow of some barren hill silhouetted against the sky. He was known as the Old Man of the Mountain, the hermit of the mighty peaks. Some said he was good, some said he was strange and cruel; but all loved to tell of him, to indulge in the vagaries of conjecture and speculation.

Once, in the course of human events, there climbed the winding rugged mountain path a whistling youth, a strung bow in his hand and a quiver of feathered arrows and a pack upon his back. He was going into the hills to hunt. With the enthusiasm of youth he would slay mountain lion, bear, and deer, not to mention the wolves, whose howlings he had heard from the valley below.

Hours went by as the hunter persistently followed the tortuous path. The gloom of evening fell, and still he was far distant from the crest of the lofty hill where little scrub pines appeared in relief against the ever present cap of snow. The chill of the mountain was in the air. The valley below was long since dark, and tiny twinkling lights revealed the abodes of men. The glow of the dying day still lingered on the mountain peak, and as the youth stood there in the twilight he was startled by the sound of breaking twigs and swishing branches, caused by the passage of some unseen creature in the thicket.

Looking quickly around, he saw standing behind him a mighty stag, whose great arched antlers had a spread of many feet and whose noble head was raised to catch the slightest warning sound. Two large mild eyes gazed at the youth, who, with the frenzy of the hunter, hurriedly raised his bow, aimed a barbed shaft at the heart of the stag, and with the utmost precision drew it to its head. Just as he was about to release the deadly shaft a detaining hand was laid upon his arm. The youth started, the bow slipped from his nervous fingers, and he turned in surprise to look into the face of a strange being.

As he turned his amazement grew for such a figure few men have seen. The face bore the marks of great age, and the snowy locks were whiter far than the mountain tops which had existed since the beginning. The figure was that of an

old man draped from head to foot in a cowl of gray cloth. In his hand he carried a great wooden staff cut from the limb of a dead tree. His eyes, however, were the wonder of the picture. Two kindly, twinkling eyes that registered even the faintest shade of emotion—one moment gleaming with the joy and life of youth, the next dimmed by the tears of sorrow—gazed into the face of the hunter. The hermit laid one hand lightly upon his shoulder, and the kindly face held only soft rebuke.

"You—you—" began the youth—"are you not the Old Man of the Mountain?"

The stranger nodded his head, and a voice, mellowed by years of goodness, answered softly and kindly: "Yes, I am the hermit who lives in these hills. But why do you shoot my stag?"

"Your stag!" exclaimed the boy hunter, "how comes it that you own the beast?"

"In this world," the other answered, "proper use is the sole warrant for ownership, and those who use God's creatures well have the first claim upon them." The old man held out his hand to the stag, and the beast, though viewing the hunter askance, came slowly across the little clearing and rubbed its nose against the friendly hand. Putting his arm around the neck of the stag, the hermit spoke to it in soft, musical tones. Just a few sighing sounds the old man made, but the animal seemed to understand. Its soft nose was turned upward, and its eyes looked at him with a tenderness of expression which moved even the hunter.

The hermit turned to the youth. "Do you still dispute my ownership?" he asked. "Do you still doubt that he is mine and I am his?"

"What were the words you used?" asked the youth in surprise. "How did you talk to him?"



Just as the youth was drawing the arrow to its head a hand was laid upon his arm. The young hunter started; the arrow slipped from between his nervous fingers, and he turned in amazement to gaze into the face of a strange being.

"I spoke in the words of the forest and the trees," he answered. "That is his language. He hears the voice of fear in the crackling of the twigs and the stealthy footsteps of the hunter; he hears life and love in the voice of the waterfall and the soft swaying of leafy branches. These are the sounds of his language, and during these many years in the mountains I have learned to talk with the tongue of beast and bird—yes, I have even learned to talk with the trees and flowers, who hear my voice and shelter me with their love and protection. Listen!"

The old man breathed out a soft, stirring sound like the breath of dawn in the treetops, and from the surrounding shrubs and brush came an answer—the same soft, stirring sound—and voices seemed to whisper.

"They all know me, they all love me, for I have lived here eighty years and never have I injured one of God's creatures. When I want food, they bring it to me from their store. The squirrels bring me nuts from their harvest, while the trees give me of their fruit, and with their own dried leaves form a shelter which protects me in the chill of winter. You have come into these hills as the spirit of man oftentimes comes into the world—to hate and to slay. Not that you really hate. Inwardly you do not loathe the beasts, but to you their souls mean no more than a drop of water from yonder stream. But I have learned to look with love upon even the drops of water, for each one has its message. I have lived up here so long that the trees and birds and flowers are one with me in spirit. I love them all, and they truly love me. Come, young hunter, lay your bow aside for awhile, for to me and to the eyes of my children of the forest that weapon means hate and death. You need not fear; leave it here, and I will bring you back for it anon."

Laying down his bow and quiver and taking the hand held

out to him, the youth accompanied the old man into the depths of the great green forest now wrapped in evening shades. Massive trunks rose up about them and falling leaves descended like a gentle rain upon them as they passed.

Suddenly the old man stopped.

"Look!" he said. From the base of a tall tree a big gray squirrel came and stood pertly, gazing saucily for few seconds, then vanished like a flash of dusky shadow to reappear a second later carrying in his mouth a ripe hazelnut. Scampering down the rough trunk, he climbed up the hermit's gray robe, and as the old man opened his mouth the dexterous animal placed the hazelnut in it. Then hopping upon the old man's shoulder he sat there, his little beady eyes darting first in one direction and then in another. The hermit took the nut from his mouth and held it out to the hunter.

"See how they care for me! But no more tenderly than I have cared for them." He spoke a few words to the squirrel, which darted away like some little sprite into the darkness of the gathering night. The squirrel had barely vanished when the youth suddenly jumped back in fear and amazement.

Before them on the road stood a great wolf. A menacing snarl issued from the beast.

"He does not know you," the old man explained. "Whenever he sees men, they throw something at him; whenever he meets them, he expects the feathered messengers of torture and death that fly from their bows. Therefore he hates them even as they hate him. But, come, you are perfectly safe."

Then, stepping up to the wolf and bending slightly, he placed his hand between the beast's teeth. The animal drew back its head and licked the kindly hand.

"This," continued the hermit, "has its price. If you essayed

this feat, your hand would be the forfeit—and probably your life.”

“But what have you done for the wild creatures that they should so love you?”

“I have been true to them. In the cold winter nights I have sheltered their young in my little cabin, I have fed the babies that the hunters left parentless, and in the spring I have released them. Many years ago a hunter climbed these hills and slew the sire of this wolf. Another destroyed its mother, and three little whelps—three howling, fighting, spitting handfuls of flesh—were left to my care. I nourished them and guarded them, and they played with my mountain lions and romped about with the bear cubs that I have in my cabin. The spring time came and they went their way, strong enough to protect themselves. This is one of them. The other two perhaps we shall see also, unless the hunters have slain them.”

They proceeded farther along the path of Nature's miracles. The great stag walked behind them, his arched antlers brushing the tree branches as he passed.

“Look here!” the old man spoke, pointing to a crotch of a tree just a short distance ahead. “In that nest are four birdlings. Yesterday an arrow found its mark, there was a flutter of wings, and with a note of agony the mother bird fell to the ground. There was a great whirr of wings and with a sharp cry of rage the father bird flew straight into the face of the hunter. Another wicked shaft and he, too, was laid low without even a fighting chance. Now hear the clamor in the tree!”

The old man climbed upon the broken stump and from a fork of the dead pine he drew forth a nest, its tiny occupants with their featherless bodies and gaping beaks, crying loudly.

“I shall take these, too, with me to my cabin, and drop by drop I shall feed them as long ago I have learned to do. Their

mother and father are gone, slain by one of my race; but among the beasts and birds I have tried to redeem my people and to prove to them that a generous spirit still dwells in the heart of man."

His hand gently cuddled the tiny birds in their nest and with caressing sounds he sought to quiet them. In a few moments the cries from the nest ceased and, sheltered by the old man's love, the hungry birdlings were stilled until he could procure food. The youth marveled at the sight, for he had never supposed that among the world of men there could be one who so loved dumb creatures. The old hermit pointed to a narrow ravine that opened before them, and there the hunter saw the peaked roof of a small cabin surrounded by little fir trees and with a chimney made of old tile.

Though a quaint, picturesque building of logs but poorly matched, this simple structure was enthroned in the midst of a realm more beautiful than words can describe. The valley far below spread out beneath the rolling hills; through it ran a stream, while in the background rose the peaks of the snow-capped mountains. This indeed was a home in the heart of Nature. About the house could be seen a number of animals. A baby wildcat rolled in the sunlight, and an old bear lay asleep with his nose between his paws, his tail just a tiny stump that wriggled mechanically as he seemed to sense in his sleep the presence of his friend. Birds were roosting in the neighboring trees and within a dozen feet of the dwelling were two score birds' nests, for it seemed the creatures of the air liked to come and build their homes around the cabin door.

The old man invited the youth in. They entered and sat upon the sawed-off ends of logs which served as seats. The cabin was bare of furnishings save a rough straw pallet; its solitary ornament was an ivory crucifix which hung upon the

wall. The room was filled with birds and squirrels, and the young hunter was moved with astonishment when he saw that a small humming-bird had built its nest in the arms of the crucifix. Looking about for stove or food, he saw no sign of either.

"So this is your home?" he murmured. "This is where the Old Man of the Mountain lives?"

"Yes," the hermit answered, "and here he has lived since the day when he realized his brother man to be false and the beast to be true. In all the world of men never did I find a friend half so faithful, half so true as these wild creatures of the hills. When I look back at the sorrows of my life and tears come to my eyes, my little birds gather around me and sing their love songs into my ears. When I am tired, the great stag comes and bends his back that I may ride upon him. When I am hungry, from the mountains and caves come birds and beasts with food. I have given up the world of human affairs to serve the things which man abuses, the things to which he has been false. These birds, these little creatures that play around my door—even the wolves, the foxes and the mountain lions—they are my brothers and I their father and elder brother. I ease the wounds made by heartless hunters and the animals know that while I live in these hills they have one friend in the world of men who will never be untrue. All the time that I have dwelt here I have never spoken one harsh word to either beast or bird, and they serve me with perfect faith and perfect trust."

A strange emotion filled the breast of the hunter.

"No more will I hunt," he cried, "for I have seen the life and love and light in the souls of these beasts. I also will be true to them."

"That is well," said the old man slowly, and he extended his

hand. "Brother, I am proud that you have seen the light which some time shall take from the world the karmic curse that rests upon all who slay their brothers. But night is falling in the mountains; in the air I hear the cries of the bears and lions. I hear the piteous wails of the dying and I must go my way, so I will now take you back again to where I met you. I am an old man and I have not much longer to stay here, but when I am gone will you be true to the beasts whom I have loved and guarded and who have loved me so well in return?"

"Yes!" answered the youth with vehemence. "To me also the world has ever been an empty place, and I will fill that emptiness with the same thing with which you have filled yours. If you are called, I promise that I will come and live in your little hut and go about as you do serving the beasts."

The hermit stood for a few seconds, dimly visible in his soft gray gown, while the youth, guided by the light of the waning moon, descended the winding path to the world that lay below.

PART TWO

Four years passed before the youth again went up into the mountains—four years of sunshine and of rain. Four years that changed the affairs of men but left the mountains just the same, save that the tightening band of civilization had ever crowded in closer and closer. The green grass, the lofty pines and the wide expanse of glistening snow apparently had not changed at all.

As the sun rose one morning a strange scene confronted the eyes of the residents of those hills and valleys. Over the mountain there hung a great, gray cloud with a million twisting, ever changing convolutions. The whole atmosphere was hushed and still; a leaden silence hung over the face of Nature. Hunters and trappers whispered that never before in all the years they had lived among the hills had they witnessed such an awesome sight. As the day wore on, the dark cloud deepened. A low moan broke out of the heavens, a sound that rose and fell with the passing of the wind, like the sigh of the dying. Each tree seemed to pick it up and to carry its echoes onward through leaves and branches. Every shrub and bush seemed to bow its head, while the arms of the lofty pines drooped inert in the steely light. From the rocks there issued a muffled groan. Boulders and masses of earth became thundering avalanches, while the snow upon the crest turned gray. Everything seemed to hang in suspense during Nature's agitation.

That day the youth was impelled again to climb the mountain. Winding in and out along the narrow path and follow-

ing intuitional guidance, he reached the point at length where the valley began and the mountain peaks parted. There among the rocks, half hidden by the overhanging darkness, stood the little cabin as he had seen it before. But now all seemed changed. He shrank back in wonderment, for out of the mountains, out of the very earth itself, out of the skies and out of the river that flowed by the door, a great stream was coming—a stream of living creatures. Stately stags and meek-eyed does, accompanied by their young, moved through the forest in silent majesty. Great lumbering bears came also, not one but many. The air was filled with the droning of the flying birds, and even the steely light was darkened by the multitude of wings.

From the forest came the wolves and foxes; in the little pool by the cabin door varicolored fish gathered, swimming to and fro, in such numbers that the water seemed one living mass. Then it seemed that the heads of the pine trees were bowed, their branches bent low, and from the mountain tops a great cloud of leaves and fine pine needles fell like the patter of rain upon the cabin. All Nature was united in a strange, sad song; the very earth itself seemed to join in the solemn dirge.

With mingled wonder and fear the youth crept to the cabin door and gazed within. There on his pallet of straw lay the still form of the Old Man of the Mountain, his hands folded upon his breast, his white beard spread upon his cowl, his eyes closed in one last, long sleep. Without entering, the youth knew the tragic truth—the hermit was dead. At the foot of the rough wooden pallet stood the great arched-antlered stag, his head depressed so that his nose rested on the edge of the couch. In the hollow of the old man's arms sat the gray squirrel, trying to force a hazelnut between the cold, white lips. Uttering shrill cries, little birds circled around his head, and like some menacing watchdog the great wolf lay before

the body of the one he loved. The soft scent of the forest came in through the open door, for the door of the old cabin was never closed. Baby birds in their forest nests called for the hand which could feed them no more.

Tears flowed down the youth's face as he gazed. Nature's children knew they had lost their truest friend. In a world that taunted them, one alone had loved them; in a world that hated and thoughtlessly robbed them of their right to live, they had found one who understood them. And now the cold fingers of death had closed his eyes and the chilly voice of the mountain peaks had whispered in his ear. To whom could they turn now when their friend was dead? No longer would there be a sweet voice to assuage the wounds committed by the rude hand of the huntsman. The beasts seemed to know this and were sad.

For a few seconds the youth stood motionless, unable to take his eyes from the scene. A great something welled up in his soul and he remembered the promise he had made—his promise to be true to these furred and feathered friends. He passed slowly through the cabin door. The great wolf looked at him but did not move—just a low howl like a groan of despair broke from the throat of the beast.

As he touched the still form of the hermit the squirrel raised its eyes—beady, bright eyes like sparks of fire—and two tiny paws reached out to cover the face of the master he had loved. The youth stroked the creature as in a mute gesture of protection it stretched its own tiny body upon that of the dead. Biting his lip to check the pain of his soul, the hunter of the days gone by stepped to the door of the cabin and looked out. He started back in sheer amazement. Such a sight as met his gaze had never before confronted man nor probably ever will again.

In every direction as far as the eye could reach the moun-

tains and valleys were teeming with life. It seemed as though every denizen of the wilds had gathered in solemn conclave. Over the mountains the heavy gray clouds rumbled and moaned and lurid flashes of lightning rent the ethereal depths. With the pathos of an inconsolable grief, the rain was falling in a gentle patter upon the leaves, and the youth, looking at the form on the couch, murmured, "Indeed blessed are the dead that the rain raineth upon."

A voice within him spoke, saying, "When was such homage ever paid to living man? When did emperor or king have such a noble cortege as this? Many noble ladies and distinguished men march in the funeral trains of the great; many there are who come and pay respects to a nation dead, oftentimes with indifference, but each creature that stands in this great cortege is true to the soul of its being. Here there is no sham, no pretense. Each one of these beasts in its very soul adores the one to whom it pays homage; each of these little furred and feathered folk would gladly die for that one; each tree and stone would give of its fleeting life the fullest and the utmost. When man has a friend among the beasts and birds, that man is good, for there is no guile in their lives, no subtleness in their adoration." Overcome, the youth sank upon his knees and gazed out at that endless stream of dumb creatures whose sorrowing eyes, lowered heads, and drooping bodies expressed the emotions of their souls. The great trees, even the blades of grass, bent their heads, for the one who had loved them all had gone forever.

"This is my task," murmured the youth, "and I will fulfill it. What greater testimonial of the depth of the hermit's sincerity than that such a circle of affection should attend him? I will return to the valley no more; I will stay and serve these beasts and birds as did the Old Man of the Mountain."

Though the shades of night fell over the mountains, they

were alight that night with a million fires upon a million sacrificial altars, and the eyes of the silent watchers, stretching in endless rows, gleamed like coals of fire in the darkness.

Next morning when the sun rose a new hermit was living in the mountains. Under a cross of rocks the body of the older hermit had been laid to rest, while his spirit interceded before a greater throne for the beasts that he had loved. The gray cowl was worn by another; the great staff now strengthened another's hand.


So as the years sped by, in his love for nature, the one who once had slain now nursed the wounds that he had made. The birds and beasts learned to know him also, and soon they gathered around his door to whisper their secrets and confide their love. Some there were who gradually forgot the friend who had gone and loved him anew in the one he had awakened.

Down in the village none knew what had happened; they did not realize that the hermit of the pines was dead, for still his gray-cowled figure wandered among the hills. They still were wont to say, "How is it that man should be willing to live with beasts?" The old hermit had known the secret; the younger one was fast learning it.

And so, as the legend says, to this day in the heart of those hills there lives an insane old man, broken by some earthly sorrow, who has given up the benefits of human affection to live in the mountains like a beast. They laugh about him in the village, at the base of the mountains, and they lay wagers as to who shall find his bones; but at the same time they tell you of that wonderful day years ago when the mountains grew dark and the beasts flocked together and the great miracle took place in the hills. That story will never die. In awe they tell you of the thunder and of the lightning. The superstitious

cross themselves and say that the Spirit of God Himself walked the hills that day. They never know, nor will they ever know, that this was Nature's Homage, Nature's only way of showing its reverence and its love for the old hermit in the gray cowl who lived in the little cabin where the valley meets the hills.

THE MAKER OF THE GODS

NCE in an ancient Eastern country now forgotten, in a city whose name has not been spoken for ages, there lived a potter who had spent many years in the study of his craft. To him clay was something more than a kind of earth.

It was a living thing, a wondrous companion. From it he molded the jars and dishes used in the city and in the small towns of the region. He was one of the most skilled at his trade and for many years had been the favored pupil of the master potter of the land. When the master passed away, his favorite pupil was admitted by all to be the most remarkable potter the world had ever known, and his skill was the envy of all his fellow craftsmen. On the potter's wheel he molded strange shapes and beautiful forms of clay, and baked them in the little kiln in his shop. A most remarkable man was this potter. All who saw him at work felt that he was more than a molder of clay. The soft touch of his fingers and the delicate lines which he brought into being on the turning wheel were little short of marvellous.

This remarkable molder of clay had a secret dream, an ideal which he had cherished for many years, for time passed slowly in that little city, and the ages had left few marks of their passing. The potter had always dreamed of the day when his

fingers should mold more glorious forms. The genius of a great creator was in his soul; he had the same sublime thoughts that must have animated the minds of the Lords of Creation when they molded man and the universe from the senseless clay of Chaos.

So, far away from the busy labors of the day, this potter worked on his great ideal, and in the secret recess of a hidden room of his shop he molded a wondrous figure out of clay. It seemed that when he was alone with this work, his fingers were animated with a power not their own—a power which through him was slowly modeling the clay into a form the like of which had never been seen by mortal eyes. The figure was that of a strange, supernatural being. Even the potter did not know why he had molded it, but his fingers brought into being lines and forms that were not of this world.

One day as he stood lovingly molding and caressing the clay, a strange light suddenly filled the little room and illuminated the mind and soul of the potter; a Voice from the silence, perhaps from the center of his own being, spoke to him:

“Long have you molded the clay into vessels and forms inanimate, but now the dream of the Master Potter is to be realized. The things which you have molded shall from now on be living beings—not merely forms of clay. The years of your apprenticeship have been well served, and you are chosen to be a molder of gods. The figure you have labored with so long and molded so gloriously into a being celestial, shall indeed live. From now on you shall make no more urns and water vessels, for with the finishing touch of the Master’s hand, every object that you make shall become divine.”

A great peace descended upon the soul of the potter as he fell on his knees in prayer. The great dream which had filled him for years was to be realized. He was to be more than a

molder of men: he, the humble potter, should mold with his fingers, glorious beings to live forever as gods!

With a last caressing touch the statue was finished and the potter stepped back to view the work of his hands. As he did so, a pale glow shone from the figure, bathing it in a soft radiance of light. Slowly the clay came to life, its gray lines turning into the living tints of flowing light. Before he realized it, the potter's statue was a living, breathing thing, and the streams of glory pouring from it almost blinded the aged man. He fell on his knees before the work of his hands, and the god—for in truth it was a god who stood before him—held out his arms and the lips so late of clay spoke to their creator:

"You are indeed my maker and have formed me from the senseless clay, and I, the god of your hand, pay homage to your Creator and to you, for it has been predestined from the beginning of time that there should come into the world a great potter who with the skill of his fingers should fashion wondrous things. You are he. Farewell."

As the potter watched, the glorious figure spread its wings of rainbow tints until it seemed that the whole room was filled with the radiance. Suddenly the ceiling opened and a great light shone down from the heavens to bathe the new-born god in an ineffable splendor. Slowly the figure raised its face, gleaming with animation and power, stretched forth its arms to the Light, and cried out in a voice which seemed to shake the very house and which thrilled the potter to the depths of his soul.

"Father, Thy creation comes!" And the Being of Light again spread its glorious wings and flew straight toward the gleaming doorway of Light, to vanish from the potter's eyes. The strange light also disappeared, and the potter's little cottage

appeared as before, but the soul of the craftsman thrilled with ecstasy and his fingers fairly sang as he started to model another figure from the shapeless clay.

The years passed by. Still the potter formed his gods of lowly earth; and as the last touch was placed on each, it came to life and, spreading its wings, soared heavenward to vanish forever amid the stars.

Gradually people of the city learned of his secret, and from all parts of the world they came to see the man who could mold from earth creatures that lived, who could mold clay into wings that could fly to the heart of the Light itself. The wise man came and asked him his secret; the foolish laughed and said he was insane; the superstitious whispered that his works were of the devil—but the potter knew that they were of his Father in Heaven.

One day while many gathered around and watched him at work, molding the clay with fingers which grew younger and swifter with the passing years, the potter spoke of his secret.

"From the clay of the earth and all things earthy must man mold the gods of his dreams; from the sticks and stones which surround him he must form the wings to bear aloft his innermost ideals. We are all makers of gods; from the clay of our own being we form wondrous ones, creatures which even with their wings of mud can fly to the footstool of Divinity." As he spoke the eyes of the potter lighted up, his voice thrilled with the inspiration of his soul, while his face, framed in silver locks seemed to glow with the same ineffable Light that surrounded the gods he had molded.

The wise men stood in silence, for they felt the presence of a Mighty One; they heard the voice of God speaking from the lips of the potter.

As the form before him grew in grandeur, the potter continued:



*With a spring upward and a spreading of its mighty pinions, the
new-born God soared heavenward to the heart of the Great
Light, a wondrous flutter of crimson robes.*

"All men who come into the world are potters, molding from their own clay the sacred ornaments of their Father's house. Into the pots and urns which they mold are poured the waters of life; but those whose souls are the urns molded on the potter's Wheel of Life, the endless wheel of birth and death, those whose cups are fired by the flame of suffering—they are the master potters of all, for from their own dead clay they shall mold gods whose spreading wings shall protect them from the terrors of darkness."

The scientists silently bowed their heads. The philosophers looked at one another, for though they knew not whereof the potter spoke, they felt the power of his words.

At last the figure was finished and the potter fell on his knees in silent prayer before it. Once again the Light came down from above and a great life entered the form of clay. Slowly it changed from the misty mold of matter to the shining garment of divinity, and a glorious figure, bathed in rosy light held out its arms and bowed its head in humility before the potter who had brought it into existence.

Those who had come to watch stood back in awe. Such sights as these were not of men, and one stepped forward in reverence to kiss the hem of the potter's robe.

The statue raised its fingers once more to the Light, and the soft flutter of its wings seemed to whisper with the voice of angels:

"Yonder is the way of Light. Farewell, oh Creator!"—and, turning its face upward, spoke: "Father, I come at Thy call." Springing up and spreading his mighty pinions, the new-born god soared upward to the Light.

Slowly a sigh passed around the group of silent watchers

who knelt in prayer by the side of the humble potter. One whispered in a hushed voice:

"We have seen a man with his own hands produce a god, molding its living form from the clay of the valley. This man is indeed inspired of God."


Another turned to the potter, saying:

"Oh, father, since you can form these wondrous beings of life which soar straight upward to the footstool of the Almighty, why do you stay in darkness here below? If you can produce these forms celestial, you are indeed a god yourself. Fashion wings for yourself and fly upward also, for you must be a god."

The potter crossed his hands upon his breast and, bowing silently, shook his head, and in a voice filled with sweet humility replied:

"My son, I am not a god; I am only one who molds clay. I am a maker of gods, but am myself a creature of the earth."

THE MASTER OF THE BLUE CAPE

NCE there lived an alchemist who sought among the mysteries of Nature and of science to find the Elixir of Life and the Philosopher's Stone. In order that his labors might be undisturbed, this alchemist severed every tie of human relationship and withdrew to a cave far up on the side of a hill. There he built a laboratory and collected a library of rare and ancient books. The laboratory he equipped with all the apparatus of the chemist—burners and flasks, and many strange instruments. There for many years he labored with chemicals, herbs, and simples, seeking to find the secret of eternal youth; in his own narrow, yet earnest, way he sought to discover that lost blessing or panacea of mankind—the Balm of Gilead promised by the sacred writings of old.

For over forty years he held himself resolutely to his task of pulverizing herbs and metals, seeking from the depths of earth to the most distant corner of heaven for the answer to his problem. Many amazing and masterly discoveries were filed away in his diary; many learned secrets he wrested from his experiments; many surprising truths he gleaned from his studies; but the master secret of alchemy, the last crowning achievement, ever eluded him. With all his studies and his labors, he was forced to confess his inability to find the answer to the mystery of mysteries.

One day as he sat, dejected and disconsolate, in his laboratory, there flashed across his mind an entirely new thought. Could it be that he was not searching where the Light was? Could it be that these ancient writers, these honored scientists, had themselves failed and that only a blind alley was disclosed to those who studied their works? It was a thought which almost overwhelmed him. He sat dazed in his chair. His head fell upon his arms which rested on the table, and he gave way to a long pent-up sorrow.

"At any rate, I have failed," he mused. "Either those who wrote knew not the secret, or else I have not read aright the meaning of their words. The things I seek I cannot find; the truth that I would know eludes me like a will-o'-the-wisp. The power of those Masters in whose footsteps I would tread and whose truths I would perpetuate has not been revealed to me either by the words of my brothers or by my own researches."

Then another thought dawned upon his soul. He laid aside his books, closed the numberless closets filled with vials and retorts, and, sitting down again in his great chair, bowed his head in prayer and asked like a child the way that he should tread. He called upon the names of the Great Ones who had gone before; he asked that the mystic alchemist of old should guide his footsteps that he might learn the truths that would serve his brother man.

Suddenly, as he sat there, a Voice spoke to him:

"Brother, what seek you?"

The old alchemist started in amazement and turned in his chair, for he knew of no one who could have guessed the secret of that hidden cave or who could have entered so silently that his reveries had not been disturbed. A tall, slender man with dark eyes and broad, noble forehead stood behind him, draped from head to foot in a flowing cape of indigo blue. The

stranger parted the cloak, and his long slim hands drew back its folds.

"Who are you," demanded the alchemist in surprise, "who comes thus to break my solitude?"

"I am that I am," answered the stranger. "Know you not that words mean nothing, that names are but terms for forms? But what I am and what I mean to you is all important. You may call me the 'Brother of the Blue Cape.' You do not know me, but I know you. For many years you have labored in this cave seeking the true answer to the Riddle of Life and the solution of the mystery of Being. Many times I aided you, but you could not know this, for until you called me I could not come. You have sought in all the world of natural things, with book and chemical, with telescope, crucible, and retort. Though you have studied long, you have not learned the mysteries of the alchemists. You have sought to glean from the sages their sacred truths, but you have failed in all your attempts, for while you have learned many things you know little more of the deeper secrets than when you started. There are those in the world, however, in whose souls the alchemist lives eternal; and who carry within the locket of their own hearts, the secret of the lost panacea; in whose innermost being still flows the Elixir of Life, and who know the secret of the furnace in which the Philosopher's Stone is made. Lay aside your books and your alembics for a moment and learn of the Path which leads to the Light."

The old alchemist leaned back in his chair, his eyes fixed on the face of the intruder. The Brother of the Blue Cape crossed and, sitting down beside him, spoke in soft, musical tones which comforted the heart of the lonely seeker and illuminated him with the Light he had looked for so long.

"Know you, brother," said the Mystic, "that all the secrets

of alchemy are concealed within the folds of this cape of blue. It is not merely a stone that you seek or a liquid to fill your vials, but the true quest of the alchemist is for the Indigo Cape. In the universe about us behold how the Father enfolds within the blue cape of Heaven all His children. Behold how the Masters gather, under the folds of their garments and under the protection of their cloaks, the hearts of men. Know you that alchemy is that process in man which shapes this cape; and only those who wear this mystic raiment may claim to know the formula of alchemy. All the powers of the universe wear these wondrous cloaks of many colors, for indigo is made of all the tones. In life these hues are called compassion, purity, and service. Beneath the cape which is called compassion the servants of the Father gather His wayward children. They labor in the Father's name, for the blue of the sky is but a vast cloak which he winds lovingly around creation. It is this cloak which each must weave as a living vesture that brings with its completion the realization of Truth. All the Masters wear capes. Their very lives are cloaks, for their hearts are so great that they seek to enfold all living things within the glory of their love. These capes are the garments of protection; they are indeed the cloaks of wisdom, more precious than any earthly garment.

"But these capes are broad; they have many folds. Those who seek the Truth must learn that the Stone of the Philosopher is always concealed somewhere within the blue cloak of Initiation. Each truth that is woven into the living garment of the soul brings with it a great advancement, a more complete revelation of spiritual consciousness. These cloaks are woven of the light of truth, of knowledge, and of power.

"There are thousands laboring with mankind who are not of mankind but who—like the spirits of Venus and of Jupiter—are bound to the earth by the needs of its children. There

are many active here who long for freedom to do greater things; noble souls from worlds unknown are chained to earth by the ignorance of man. The eldest of the Brothers are forced eternally to perform the labors that man should do. The Masters must forsake their cosmic tasks to adjust the difficulties of the ignorant; they must gather the wayward souls under the protective folds of their vast mantles.

"Each time a soul is found in the world of men who will take upon itself the sorrows of the world, who will labor that others may have more Light, who will learn the things worth while and thereby become strong enough to carry the burdens of humanity—when such a one is found, the Master takes off his own mantle and places it upon the shoulders of this disciple. The Master is then free to advance to greater works, to don a more ample and more burdensome garment. In the days to come, the children of earth must bear the responsibilities beneath which now the gods are bowed. The Powers of Light are searching for those who will wear their garments, for those whose souls, like capes of blue, are wide-spreading enough to gather earth's weaker ones under their folds."

The old alchemist's eyes were closed and he heard the words as in a dream, but suddenly a great flood of Light descended into his being. He saw the things so long hidden; the truth so long concealed streamed into his aspiring soul.

"I have found it!" he cried. "I have found the Philosopher's Stone. I see its Light radiating from the depths of my own soul. I have found the Elixir of Life as it pours upon me from the rivers of living water. I feel the Balm of Gilead as, drop by drop, it falls from my wounded heart. I see! I see!"

"You have seen well," answered the Mystic, as he sat enfolded in his mantle, "for know that out of your own being flows the lost panacea for the world's woe. The kindly ac-

tion, the soft touch, the smile in the moments of sorrow—these make up the Elixir of Life to your brother man. The Philosopher's Stone shines in resplendent glory from the one who lived the life and learned to know the doctrine, while the Balm of Gilead is in truth the loving word in the moment of sorrow, the selfless compassion in the hour of need. Your quest is over, brother; you have found those things for which you sought. Your years of labor have their reward; your diligence has not been in vain. Now, what will you do with it? How will you use the precious secrets which have been disclosed to you?"

The old alchemist rose to his feet, his eyes alight with a strange glow which revealed the glory of the Light within. His tottering footsteps grew stronger, as though indeed he had found the fountain of eternal youth. His shaking hands grew steadier, while he straightened himself and pointed toward the villages outside the cave.

"I am going back again," he cried. "All these years I have hidden myself away in this cave under the hill, but now I see that my place is in the world. I am going back to tell all the truths that you have unveiled to me. I will go out to live the Philosopher's Stone. Of the Elixir of Life and the Balm of Gilead I will give to all mankind, rich and poor, young and old, of whatever caste or creed. They shall see the Light that I have found. They shall also know how I have found it. The gods have been gracious and have given me the treasures I sought, and now I dedicate them to the service of men."

The Stranger in the Blue Cape smiled and, taking the old man by the shoulder, led him back to the chair, saying: "Sit down and rest. You have found the object of your quest, and your soul is filled with great compassion. You shall indeed serve your brother men to the glory of your God and the liberation of the Masters."

Slowly the old man's head sank upon his breast. His heart, beating fast with the glory of his great discovery, was quieted by the hand of the Master. The Mystic stood over him while the old alchemist slept as peacefully as a child.

"Rest, brother," whispered the Mystic, "for your quest has been long and the search intense. Rest, for before you are labors eternal. You are now coming to the day when for you rest shall be no more. Sleep, for the eyes now closed will be open for ages. Be happy now, for before you on distant Calvary rises the shadow of a Cross." The Mystic sank on his knees and, clasping his hands, raised his eyes to heaven, praying:

"Father, I thank Thee that another has found the Light, that a soul long wandering has taken the path which leads to liberation. I thank Thee that I have been freed for a greater task. I thank Thee, Father, that this soul has found this day the thing it sought; and O God Eternal, help me in my endless search for the keys to the mysteries. In the name of Thy Blessed Son, Amen."

The Master rose and, taking off his indigo mantle laid it over the shoulders of the sleeping alchemist.

"Here, brother, is the garment that I have worn. But a short time ago I gathered you in its folds. Now I give it to you with all its joys, with all its sorrows. Under its folds gather you the souls of men, in the name of the Great One whose Blue Cape envelopes creation."

The Mystic then walked slowly from the cave, his face calm with peace and divine compassion. He raised his eyes once more to the Light shining from the heavens:

"Father, I am ready for Thy greater work."

From somewhere two hands reached down and there fell

upon the Mystic's shoulders, a great cloak of blue, far more voluminous, far more cumbersome than the other. Under the weight of its massive folds he staggered as the Christ staggered under the weight of His cross. But with a strength divine he rose and, spreading wide the folds which seemed to carry within them the whole creation, he cried out with a joyous voice to the world in pain: "Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

With this great cape protecting and concealing thousands of living creatures, the Mystic floated silently over the world, gathering under the folds of his garment the souls of men. The alchemist had taken the lesser task and freed the Master for a greater. When the alchemist awoke, he could discern no garment of blue, but his soul, awakened by its vision, had become invested with the indigo Cape of Compassion which forever enfolds the sorrows of the world.

THE FACE OF CHRIST

WHEN Christianity was young and the disciples of the Master still walked the earth, there was once a beautiful soul who dedicated his life to the search for the Face of Christ. One night while lying in the stone cell where he had been cast by the pagan emperors, his spirit broken and his mind reeling with uncertainty, a wondrous vision had appeared to this yearning one who for so many years had been sickened by the world's woe. On the blank wall of his cell a great Light appeared and in its center gleamed the Face of Christ surrounded by a golden halo of glory. On the Master's brow was the wreath of thorns and His great eyes, though filled with mortal agony, shone with divine compassion. From that day on the soul of the Christian was filled with but one desire; there was but one thing in all the world to live for, but one quest which would form a worthy adventure, and this was to find again the glorious Face that had shone from the wall of his cell.

In some strange way he was released from his prison and, taking his staff in hand, he vowed he would wander the world till again he found the Face of his Master. No matter how long the quest, no matter what suffering and privation stood in the way, he resolved that nothing should deter him from this one thing to which his soul aspired.

His travels took him into distant countries, through snowy wastes and over desert sands. Among all peoples he sought the Face of the One he loved. One day while wandering in a distant land he heard of a Wise One who, it was said, lived in a hut made of the leaves of trees, by the side of a great cliff at whose base a mountain stream ran to the sea.

After many days search in a strange and broken country, where it seemed that the gods of creation had hurled great rocks at the demons of darkness, the wanderer found the hut. In answer to his gentle tap upon the door, an aged figure appeared, who asked in a voice vibrant with sympathy, what the wanderer sought.

The Christian, hungry for the kindness and sympathy so long denied him, poured out from his heart to the kindly ears of the aged one his tale of anguish and disappointment.

"My child," answered the aged one to the question so often asked, "you seek to find the Face of your Master, you seek to know where they have laid the Christ, for when they went to His tomb they found it empty. You are right, my son, He has not gone far away. He is near; and if you know where to seek truth you shall find Him and know His ways. Here is a vial. In it is a mystic fluid which was prepared by the Essenes, the Holy Men of Mount Tabor. It is called the drink of the gods. If you but taste it, to you it shall be given to find the thing you seek." He handed the vial to the lonely pilgrim who with an expression of gratitude accepted it.

But the philosopher raised his hand in warning, "Wait; one other thing you must know, one thing you must promise, before it shall be given you to drink of this mystic draught. In whatever you see the Face reflected, that you must serve, to that you must make some sacrifice or give something that is precious to you."

"That will I gladly," cried the hungry soul as he knelt to receive the aged philosopher's blessing. Silently he passed out of the hut, bending low at the little doorway. Claspings the precious elixir close to his breast, he wandered off again into the wilderness.

Reaching a quiet spot in a glorious valley, the Christian stopped and sitting down upon a prostrate tree, took the vial in his hands and gazed at the wondrous liquid of ever-changing lights and colors that sparkled in the crystal container. Unsealing it, the student, breathing a silent prayer, drained the contents. A strange feeling stole over him and before his eyes there rose a golden haze of Light which for an instant benumbed every atom of his being. In a moment, however, the mist cleared and the mystic gazed around in amazement not unmingled with terror.

As far as he could see in every direction the world was a gleaming mass of Light that seemed to stream out from the center of every living thing, and facing him from every direction there were millions of faces, all alike, each one of them the crucified head of his Saviour. It seemed that each stick and stone shone forth with the glory of that Face; each bird and tree poured out its soul through those two sorrowful eyes and the glorious radiance of the Light.

The Christian fell upon his knees in prayer, for even the grains of sand on which he walked shone forth with the glorious countenance of his Lord and each time he placed his feet upon the ground he shuddered, for they fell upon the Master's Face.

At last a Voice told him to rise and go on. As he proceeded, his heart faint within him, he came near to the foot of a mighty mountain of black granite. Gazing across a lake he saw a wondrous Face, more glorious than all the others,

shine out from the very side of the mountain. It was the Face of the Christ, and as he watched, thin streamlets of blood poured down the agonized countenance from under the wreath of thorns.

The mystic stretched out his arms with a single cry, "Messiah!" He looked down into the waters which lapped the rocks at his feet, and there, gleaming from his own soul, from his own being reflected in the water, was the Face of the Master. Every way he turned the Faces gazed at him; even the air seemed filled with millions of them. Even in the clouds this glorious Visage with its divine sadness gazed steadily at him, imprinting its agony and sorrow upon every fiber of his soul.

At last he could endure it no longer. Those eyes burned into his very being; they seemed to reproach him and yet were filled with compassion and love. With a great cry he raised his arms before his face and plunged headlong into the waters at his feet. He seemed to be twisting and floating in the midst of an endless darkness. Gradually he ceased to move, and at last the gray lights of earth began to flicker around him.

He awakened and found himself sitting on the little plateau where he had come to drink of the crystal liquid in the vial. The realization of what he had sought filled his soul with a truer understanding of the mystic Christ; and while the Faces no longer gazed out at him, wherever he went he could feel their presence; and at last he realized where his Master had been laid.

Quickly climbing the rocks, he sought again the hut of the philosopher to tell him of the wondrous vision he had seen, but the little rustic dwelling of leaves and sticks was gone. No trace of it could he find among the mountains. The vial

had vanished also. All remembrance slowly faded away; all that remained was the Face he had sought.

The years rolled on. From town to town, from village to mystic hermitage, the Christian prophet made his way, and to every one he told the mystery of the Christ as he had seen it. He told of the Last Supper, of how every day it is repeated that men may live. He told of the Christ and how the blades of grass, the bird, and the beast reflect the light of the Master; he told of the spark that shines forth from the souls of men and the glorious Faces in the grains of sand. And, bowing humbly to each flower and shrub, he told how Christ dies daily that man's glory may increase.

So through the years he was beloved of men; he went forth healing the sick, assisting all who suffered, giving words of cheer to those who were heavy laden; not for their sakes alone and never for his own, but only with divine hope that his words of life would bring a smile to that sorrowing Face that shone out from every creature that he served. He loved the birds and flowers and even the wild animals served and honored him, for he loved them all. From the little feathered breasts of the fowls of the air the Christian saw the Master's Face shining out with its wreath of thorns. And even the wolves that howled through the darkness of the night proclaimed the agony of the Christ.

The years rolled by and still he served in the name of the Master's Face. No longer had he friend or foe, no longer was one man different from another. The only thing he saw in others was that glorious Light daily crucified anew by the sin and ignorance of the world. The passing years bent his back, the steps once strong and steady grew weak and halting, but still the Christian fulfilled his pledge to serve all things in which he had seen the Master's Face. He loved the little

children and was beloved by them, for in their laughing eyes he saw the sorrowing ones of the Master; and behind the so-called joys of the world he saw hungry hearts; amidst the bustling throng of human beings he saw the lowly Nazarene begging kindness from the hands of men. Every ringlet waving round some glorious face whispered to this Christian's heart the mystery of the wreath of thorns.

The world could not understand the soul of this lonely mystic; yet in spite of his strange ways and stranger words he was loved of all, who, if they did not comprehend the vision of the seer, still felt in some mysterious way the power and glory of his work. He lived in a cabin fashioned by his own hands out of rough lumber and rougher stones. He blessed even the stones as he tenderly placed them, for from each the eyes of his Loved One seemed to shine.

One night a Voice spoke to him as he lay on his straw covered cot, saying, "The Master calls thee. Go ye to the tops of the distant mountains." The kindly old man rose from his pallet and, taking the staff he used to support his steps through the snow, with perfect faith he ventured into the storm, as he had many times before, on his errands of mercy.

Unknowing ones said that this was his last trip; that the blinding tempest, the darkness, and the treacherous ravines would claim him as their own. But the seer knew otherwise, for though the storm burst among the mountains and rocks overburdened by the snow were hurled headlong from the heights, the stones refused to fall on one who loved them all so well, and the darkness of the night was lighted by little gleaming sparks that he might know his way. The wild creatures of the woods came forth and guided him, and as he wandered through the darkness of the blizzard, he raised his eyes to Heaven, saying, "Father, why dost thou so protect me?"



Heeding not the rough stones, he fell on his knee amidst the drifting snow and, clasping the hem of the Christ's garment, reverently kissed it.

And the answer came, "I do not. The love that thou hast given forth serves thee in thine extremity."

Once again the aged Christian stood as he had that momentous night when first he drank the mystic potion from the vial the philosopher had given him. The rocks and snow gleamed again with the glory of their Lord, their radiance softened by the Divine Face he had served so long among men. But now the wreath of thorns was gone; it was no longer the face of agony but one of divine peace and benediction.

"O Master," cried the old man in ecstasy, "have I helped to bring to Thy face this smile?" And as far as the Light could go the millions of Faces nodded in reply.

The old Christian sank upon his knees, crying, "O Father! I thank Thee, for indeed my life has not been in vain. My labors have had their reward. No greater than this could any man desire, for I have seen my Messiah smile."

Then the great blizzard, so long hanging over the mountains, burst upon the lonely traveler, beating him with swirling sheets of snow and stinging hail, which, striking the rocks, broke and scattered like pebbles about him. For a little way the solitary figure struggled against the elements but at last sank by the wayside. As he gazed out at the falling snowflakes he clasped his hands in prayer, for each glistening particle had turned into a shining Face and he was being buried as it were in a mantle made of the loving eyes of the Master he had served.

Suddenly a great hush fell over the mountains, and out of the heart of the storm appeared a celestial white-robed figure whose hands stretched forth to bring peace to the world. Slowly the faces vanished from the wood and stones and the Light

gathered around the single stranger who was coming through the night. With a cry of divine joy the aged Christian staggered to his feet and half falling, half running, with hands outstretched, rushed towards the approaching figure.


At last the glory of his work was crowned! For the wondrous Form walking towards him was that of the Christ he so long had served. Heeding not the rough stones, he fell on his knees amidst the driving snow before the Christ and, clasping the hem of His garment, kissed it.

Without a word the glorious Figure stooped, and lifting in his arms the form broken with age as though it were but a child, He carried it slowly away, over the mountains and the valleys into the skies themselves. The wanderer had come home. He lay down in his Father's house to sleep, conscious of the great compassion which he knew reached out to all creation. As he closed his eyes he saw that the Master he had loved so well was still regarding him with divine tenderness.

* * *

The next day when the storm had abated the people of the village went out to search for the mystic they had loved, for they knew that he lay somewhere in the wilderness of snow. They found his staff and the little package of herbs that he carried, but of him there was no sign. Sadly they shook their heads and pointed to the great ravines and steep precipices and rushing waters beneath, for they did not know that the old man was at last one with the Face that he had sought.

THE GUARDIAN OF THE LIGHT

NCE in a little town whose name is no longer remembered there lived a lonely one who had wandered in many lands searching for the answer to the riddle of life. He had prayed again and again to be entrusted with that light which alone can dispel the shadows from the hearts of men. He had asked to be tried, to have the opportunity to prove his worth before his God and his fellow men. But the passing years left his soul in darkness, and the truths his spirit longed to know forever eluded his search.

It chanced that on a certain evening he wandered far away from the little home in the valley, on the outskirts of the nameless village where he had taken up his abode. Above that valley mighty mountains raised their lofty peaks to pierce the deep blue of the sky. Looking up he was amazed to see a little star of light shining out clearly from the highest point of the snow-capped range. At the same instant a voice within whispered to climb to the summit of the lofty peak. It told him that this little flame which flickered through the eventide was the Light that he had sought in his pilgrimage through the world below.

While he gazed upward, his heart grew faint within him, for great cliffs rose steeply from the valley—not even a bird

could find space to build a nest on their precipitous walls. The tops of the mountains were white with a snow which never melted. Chilly glaciers glistened like precious stones, even when the valley below was parched and withered by the heated winds of summer.

The pilgrim determined to ascend the mountain, and hour after hour trudged along, his eyes fixed on the little light above. Drawing close to the foot of the cliffs he discovered, to his great joy, that a tiny path led up around the rocks—a twisting byway which could not be seen from below and which might never have been found had he not first resolved to climb the sheer precipices at any cost.

Picking up a dead branch for a staff, the pilgrim mounted slowly this broken path, around jagged rocks and over heaps of earth where the rains had caused the disintegrating cliffs to collapse upon the road. He soon realized that he was leaving the little village far below. The distant lights of the hamlet gleamed brightly in the darkness, while the purple shadows concealed in their misty depths the world he had known.

While climbing the wanderer kept looking to the top of the peak where the lonely little light shone ever more brightly as he drew nearer to its gleaming heart. That the glowing spark would burn there was itself a miracle, and the pilgrim could not help wondering what could be the source of the light, and what purpose it served.

"Surely," he reasoned, "that is not a fire, nor can it shine from the window of a house, for no one can live on the top of this mountain with nothing but ice and snow and the chilly blasts of eternal winter—it is too lonely, too cold, too desolate, —yet the beam is there!"

He rubbed his eyes. "Can this be some trick of the imagination?" he asked himself, looking again. Still it shone. Day



As the pilgrim came closer, he saw that the figure was an old man, robed from head to foot in a flowing garment which the wind, screeching among the cliffs, blew out from him in trails of white.

came and went; the second night found the pilgrim on a little plateau, where he rested, at the edge of the snow line, contemplating the mountains which stood like hoary patriarchs, raising their heads in adoration to their Maker. Some rose far higher than others; he counted six of these great peaks besides the one on the slope of which he stood. Amazement filled his heart, for on the very top of each flickered a solitary flame. Many times in the years that had passed, the wanderer, as a youth, had climbed among these cliffs and scaled the mountains, but never before had he seen those lights which gleamed like jewels in the diadems of kings.

Filled with desire to solve the mystery, the wayfarer climbed the narrow path with renewed vigor, creeping along shelves of rock where one misstep would have meant destruction. Cliffs towered above him and deep canyons yawned below. As he mounted higher, the air grew chilly and he could see snow among the crevices about him. The cold blasts from the glaciers caused him to shiver and draw his garments more closely about him. The Light he sought grew ever brighter, and now each footstep brought nearer the gleaming star that he had wandered so far to find.

The pilgrim soon began to distinguish a solitary figure standing on the very crest of the highest glacier holding aloft a lighted lamp. Coming closer, he saw the form was that of an old man robed from head to foot in flowing garments, which the wind, sweeping among the cliffs, blew out in trails of white. His sandaled feet were in the snow, and his head was bent forward as he leaned upon an ancient staff cut from some mystic tree, mayhap even from the Tree of Life itself.

The traveler could see that the old man was weary, for he swayed and seemed about to fall; but the arm holding the Light never wavered. In the lamp of old and tarnished brass

burned a mysterious flame, and from that flickering light thousands of little rays like winged creatures streamed forth to disappear in the darkness of the great Unknown. As the pilgrim watched, he realized that these rays, in an endless processional, swept round the world.

At last, breathless from his long climb, chilled by the darkness and cold, shrouded in a night that knew no day, with even the lights of the village screened from his view by a seething mass of clouds, the pilgrim reached the lonely figure.

Seeing the traveler approaching, the aged man raised his noble head crowned with silver, and his great kindly eyes, second only in their brightness to the Light he carried, were turned upon the pilgrim.

"My son," he called in a deep mellow voice, "what seekest thou here amid these mountain tops in the darkness of such a night as this?"

The wanderer answered, "I saw the Light you hold while I was down in the valley and have come to ascertain what it was."

The Old Man, gazing lovingly at his little lamp, replied: "The Light thou seest is the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The Light I carry is the life of men. In me thou seest one of those who hath dedicated his soul to the Light. I am one of the Silent Watchers who through the darkness of ignorance and the night of men hold aloft this beacon which showeth that God still keepeth His trust with His children. There are but seven sparks which light the whole world. Under many names man worships them, and under many forms he honors them; but know this: they are but Lights held in the hands of the Compassionate Ones. Thou seest them gleaming through the darkness on yonder mountain peaks."

"What mountains are these that surround us?" asked the pilgrim; "and why stand you here alone?"

"These are the lofty mountains, the high places of the world, which are always concealed from the world below by clouds and mists," answered the Old Man. "We are the Sleepless Watchers of the destiny of worlds; we stand on these lofty mountains that all the world may have these sparks of life. My torch was lighted on the altar of Cosmos and hath never gone out. I have stood here since the dawn of Time, since these mountains rose from the darkness of Chaos, faithful to these children of men whose eyes have discerned the mountain peaks from whence cometh their Light."

"Are you not lonely here amid the ice and snow?" "Yes, verily," answered the Old Man, a strange, sad look in his eyes; "we are ever alone. We are the Seven Watchers through the nights of human ignorance; the Compassionate Sons of humanity are our lords and masters. Here through the ages we stand. We are of the Lonely Ones, and these mountain tops are our homes."

"But surely, father, others will come to relieve your vigil that you may rest, and they will hold aloft your lamp."

"Alas! my son, for ages we have waited, but none will hold our lights."

"But surely some come to help you? Some climb these mountains?"

"Yes," replied the keeper of the lamp, "the path has been worn smooth by many feet but when those who come have felt the cold touch of night on the mountain top, heard the sighs of the wind chilled by the breath of glaciers, they stay but a little while; then they draw the folds of their garments about them and return again to the valleys below. It is too

cold, too lonely, too silent. There is no glory in carrying this Light, no honor in the sight of men, no reward but the endless vigil. Few indeed will even try to keep alight this solitary flame."

The pilgrim thought for a few moments, his heart too full for words. At last he turned to the Old Man, saying: "Father, let me hold your lamp, let me keep aloft your beacon light that those upon the other mountains shall know you have been true to your trust."

The Lonely One raised his head, and his great eyes gazed long and searchingly at the pilgrim. Then he pointed upward to the skies, where far above the mountain tops the orbs of heaven shone down in silent glory, and the great procession of stars marched on through the night in perpetual pageantry.

The Old Sentinel spoke, his voice thrilling with an eloquence divine: "Yonder, my son, you see the lamps that light the heavens. Each distant spark that shines forth signifies that the pact between the Creator and His creation has not been broken. When I have found someone to carry my Light, to stand in my place faithful and true, I will journey to the Stars. From the corners of the heavens, from the mystic arches of creation, voices call; the fires upon unnumbered altars must be kept burning through the darkness of Creation's sleep. When one of earth is found to bear this flame, then indeed do the Children of the Heavens rejoice and the one who is freed goes forth to hold a greater Light."

The pilgrim bowed his head in thought, and at last, walking over to the lonely figure humbly said: "Father, I will carry the Light, my hand shall hold it aloft, for you are old and I am young. Give me the lamp, I swear that I will serve it and feed it with all the love and compassion of my soul."

The face of the Aged Man lit up for a moment, and he gave the Lamp to the pilgrim.

"My blessings are with you, my son, for while your spirit is willing beware lest the flesh be weak. For ages no one but myself has held the Light. Since first these mountains came, I alone have supported it, watched it, protected it, for if its flickering gleams die out, with them fails the light in the souls of men. We have never broken faith with man, nor with one another, and through the dim ages that have passed, when even our names were used to curse our brothers, we Silent Seven have loved those who have betrayed us, served those who have denied us, and illumined those who have ridiculed us. Do you likewise, for you are no longer one of earth. I go to other works."

Slowly the white-robed figure turned and walked away over the crunching snow, growing smaller and smaller in the distance.

The watching pilgrim saw the feeble figure, with its flowing beard, leaning heavily upon its staff, reach the very edge of the great cliffs that rose from the valleys below. Then the Old Man glided off into the sky, and with one last wave of the hand passed gradually from sight, amid the stars of the firmament. It seemed that the lights of heaven shone brighter as he vanished among them, while the beacons on the mountains swayed and gleamed with a more glorious splendor.

The pilgrim, filled with the radiance of his ideal, stood holding the lamp, his heart filled with pure sentiments and noble purposes. He felt the majesty and the power that comes to one of the Guardians of Creation. The greatest and grandest in his nature spoke; the unselfish purpose of his labor thrilled him with life and hope.

So he stood, the wind and the snow beating against him.

Great rumblings and roarings, as of avalanches shooting down the mountain side, the crackling of glaciers, and the howl of wolves broke the silence of his vigil.

The hours passed, his arm grew weary and he too swayed upon his staff with fatigue; but for reasons unknown he could not lower the Light. His fingers seemed fastened to the Lamp which glowed steadily in spite of his trembling arm. The chill of the snows came upon him, which only those know who have faced death amidst their silent, silvery wastes.

By degrees a great fear invaded the heart of the pilgrim. Must he stand upon that mountain top forever? Would that night never have an end? Would the sun never shine again? The years rolled on, and ages were counted with the dead; but still the watcher, now old and gray himself, held the Light upon the mountain top. But it was no longer with exaltation in his heart, no longer for love of his task. His eyes were fixed longingly on the valleys below. His mind fashioned again and again pictures of the things he had known; smiling faces of those he had left behind forever kept forming in the reeling mists which eternally surrounded him. He had begun to feel what it was to be apart. He was alone in a great silence broken only by Nature's sounds. He prayed that he might hear a human voice! His mind reeled, his brain grew hazy; there was but one thought—he must leave that fearful place. He could not, would not, stand there through all eternity; he had not the strength to face the lonely, friendless ages which stretched out before him.

Slowly his agony consumed him until he raved at the very Light he bore. Dying for friendship and love, solitary on the mountain top, he cursed the very hour that brought him into being. Little by little the flame in his hand grew dim as the spark of truth in his own soul died out, until even the friend-

liness of its warming glow was denied him. Yet he could not escape, he could not move; he must remain with his self-appointed task. He prayed unto God for mercy; he begged that the powers of darkness release him—but still he stood alone in the fields of snow bearing aloft the Light which grew feebler every day.

At last the great despair seized him, the despair that many have felt—the helplessness, the hopelessness without end! He pitied the Lonely Watcher whose place he had taken, he was conscious of the gray beard on his own cheeks, he thought of the years of life which he felt were wasted. Then his eyes turned to the other mountains on whose peaks the lights still glowed, and in spite of his great anguish his heart went out to them.

Suddenly, after what seemed an eternity, his soul was filled with joy and his life welled up again, for returning through the sky he saw the white-robed form of the Silent Watcher. Like a drifting shadow of night the aged figure walked across the arch of the heavens and finally placed his sandalled foot upon the crunching snow of the mountain and, staff in hand, reached the side of the Lonely One.

“My son, through Cosmos has come the call. You are not strong enough to carry the burden of this Light. Too soon you came up the mountain—but it is still within your power to choose. Will you keep the Light? Will you be true to it through the ages?”

“O Father, I cannot! It is so lonely—nothing to think of, no one to talk to. If I stay longer, I shall go mad. Already my eyes have seen things not of earth—strange creatures, visions of delirium. The solitude, the silence and the darkness speak to me with a thousand torturing tongues. O God! I cannot stay! Father, take the Light lest it go out!”

The Old Man grasped the lamp and as his fingers closed over its handle the dying spark gleamed forth with renewed life, while the rays streamed out again to every corner of the world. The broken-hearted one, relieved of his burden, fell disconsolate at the feet of the aged philosopher.

A moment later, he rose with one idea in his mind—to escape from that terrible place! With his face between his hands, half crazed with terror and despair, he rushed head-long down the mountain. He even feared to turn back and look at the Light, but at last he found courage to do so and the tears came to his eyes as he saw the lonely figure of the Silent Watcher, his long gray beard still lying upon his chest, his head bowed upon his staff, his right hand holding aloft the Light of the World.

“O Father!” he sobbed, “I would that I could stay! Now I know what you have suffered, I know what the Lonely Ones have endured. I know the price that must be paid by the Saviors of the world. But I cannot stay; I am not ready, I have not the understanding which would fill the emptiness of my solitude!” Turning, he dashed, half running, half falling, heedless of cliff and gulley, down into the mists that hid the world below.

It seemed days before he reached the village he had left, but when he did so a cry burst from his lips. Happy faces no longer thronged the streets, laughing voices no longer rang. The hamlet was deserted. Only a heap of ruins remained.

So he wandered forth over hill and plain, searching for those he had loved. But during the ages he had stood upon the mountain peak, all whom he had known had passed away. The things that to him had once been dear were now but shams and follies. Although he had returned to the world he was not of the world, for his soul was still on the mountain

top holding the Light. For years he searched, but he could neither find the happiness he sought nor the mountains that touched the sky. He could not find the Seven Lights that gleamed from their rugged cliffs, though now he prayed for them as fervently as he had once begged to be freed from their service.

At last, upon a dusty roadway which for many years he had been traveling, the lonely pilgrim sank to rise no more. Broken in mind and body, aged with sorrow and suffering, the soul within at last awaited liberation.

A fellow wanderer on the great path found him there, the last spark of life still gleaming faintly in the dying form.

"Brother," whispered the pilgrim, in his eyes a far-away look as he gazed into the darkness of the night, "can you see above you Seven Lights shining in the sky on the crests of the eternal mountains?"

The wayfarer turned and looked. "No, I can see nothing," he answered, holding the dying form in his arms.

"I can," whispered the feeble voice. The expiring man held out his arms to the sky and, half rising, his face illuminated with divine glory, he cried out: "Father! Father! I come back to carry the Light. Go again to the stars that call you with their beckoning lanterns in the sky; tell them you need never return, for this time I shall not fail!"

The form sank back, while somewhere on the crest of the mountains a spirit that at last had climbed the heights took again the Light to hold it forever, its rays bright with the glory of his own unfolded soul.

THE ONE WHO TURNED BACK

NOTWITHSTANDING the apparent fact that humanity changes but little, there are great moments when the world really does grow better than it ever was before. One of these moments is when one of its children ceases to be labored for and becomes in turn one of the laborers in the vineyard of humanity. In each age through which the earth passes there are a few who win immortality; there are one or two in each great civilization who rise to the fuller requirements of life and learn so well the lessons which confront them that they are capable of becoming a power for the unfoldment of men. There are some who discover, with their own self-evolved qualities and faculties, their true reason for being. There are a few, who gathering around them the shining garments of a purified soul, pass behind the veil that separates the gods from men, to come forth on the great Wheel no more.

From a civilization that has since passed into darkness there rose one who had suffered much, who had toiled long, had felt the anguish of the world, had seen the uselessness of mortal glory; who had performed the Great Work and climbed the lofty heights, seeking eternally to draw others up to the realms of Truth. He was a marvelous philosopher who still

knew how to pray, a divine scientist with the gentle touch of the simple man.

This beautiful soul now stands at the Gates of Gold robed in the garments of a purified being, radiant in the resplendent glory of the gods. The tinkling bells upon his garments play the music of a harmonious life; his form divine gleams with a million lights, each one of them a prayer of thanksgiving and a blessing from one of those with whom it had labored faithfully and well.

Before the footstool of the Gods stands the Master. He was one out of the world of men—one who had found, and for ages walked, the path of selflessness. At last, after the eternities of preparation and experience in the world of things, this one had earned the right to knock at the door of immortality. Leading upward to the skies, golden stairs rose from star to star; behind it the darkness of the world's eternal night, the uncertainty of man, which for the Master had given place to the glory of the eternal sunrise.

There comes a time in the life of every living thing when it will stand as this soul stood, on the borderland between the human and the Divine. Countless numbers have stood there, and with that great and glorious sorrow have seen release before them; but withal, truly great souls have felt the pangs of longing and could not bear to leave the world behind. There is a moment when the candidate realizes that immortality indeed has its price, and when the day draws near for him to pass forever behind the veil, he understands that it is harder to give up the world and his labors for his brother man in meekness and humility than it is to go on to the greater life eternal. For once the soul puts on its robe of glory and takes that immortal step the Initiate is no longer of the world; between him and the hearts of men must always remain the blue

veil of the gods. He may walk again with them, may labor side by side with others, but always he knows and they feel that he is not of their world.

Therefore the Initiate was not joyous when he saw his Father's house before him, for he knew that the day was drawing near when he was to become a pillar in the House of his God and go no more out.

As He stood there a Shining Presence came to him garbed in the gleaming vestments of Eternal Light, and taking him by the hand said, "You have walked well the way, you have fulfilled the destiny of the Recording Angels, the book of your works is closed, the accounts are balanced and the seal of completion bearing upon it the signet of the Gods is placed upon your life; you have now finished this chapter of your being. Before you, up that twisting stairway, lie new worlds to conquer, new duties, new sorrows and a fuller understanding. Already you have risen from the night of human darkness to the greater Light, and the garments of compassion, fashioned by your selfless soul, await you. Come forward, when you will don them. But first there are things that you should see, that you may justly know the choice that you would make. Follow me."

The Shining Guide turned, and taking the newborn Master by the arm, led him to the top of a lofty mountain. Before him the heavens and the earth unrolled—hovering over creation were a million lights, and the flutter of the wings of flame made incessant music with the resounding cadences of revolving spheres. Above in the land of Light, were the habitations of the Immortals, the homes of the sainted souls. As the newborn Master gazed with the eye of immortality, he saw floating in the skies the great Beings whom man knows only as suns and stars. He saw great Saturn with its spreading wings

and the misty robes of ether that clothe forms celestial. The shining face of Mars gleamed with seraphic radiance—the ponderous marching orbs no longer things of form but life and light Divine. He saw the twelve Hierarchies of the Heavens, the flaming Sons of the Dawn; while the ministering angels, fluttering like great night birds, hung between heaven and earth wielding dominion. He saw a world unknown to men unroll before him and he gazed out in awe and admiration.

“Yet, indeed,” answered the Shining One to the question that filled his soul, “your labors have only begun. For when you have finished in the world you leave behind, you have merely earned the right to toil in the realms of light. In this great plan there is no rest, no release. As you have climbed from the darkness of terrestrial night, so through the eternity of the cosmic now you mount onward, until somewhere behind the eternal plan you find the Source of All, the glorious Planner of creation, from whom none will ever return to tell the way.”

The Master looked about him and thought how different the world seemed than when he had stood below and gazed up at it. Instead of the apparent senseless happening of *Things*, he now saw the wondrous *Causes*, the intelligent reasons for everything that was.

“If mankind only knew,” he whispered, “could only see the things I now behold!”

“Yes,” answered the Shining One, “some day they will know, some day they will realize the wondrous chain of selfless lives that binds creation in a common cause, the wondrous plan of Mind Divine that struggles to free itself from the senseless clay of Chaos.”

The Guide turned again: “Come,” he said, “there are other things I would have you know.”

The Master found himself now in the darkness of the night. He had crossed the single line dividing the false from the true. While he stood talking to his Guide a soft sob broke the silence.

"What is that?" he whispered.

"That," answered the Guide, "is the call of the world you are leaving behind. It is the voice speaking from the broken heart of mankind crying to the Gods above to send them Light and Truth."

Low moanings broke the silence. Weeping and now and then a curse filled the air with anguish unutterable.

"What is this?" whispered the Master.

"This," answered the Guide, "is the desert of darkened souls. This is the battlefield of human emotion, and on this broken ground lie in agony those who could not endure the fight; cursing their Gods, praying to the Beings who brought them into existence to give them darkness eternal that at least they may lose the sense of suffering."

The Master covered his face with his hands and the tears rolled down his own cheeks, as he thought of the years of his own wretchedness when his voice had been added to those who pray through the darkness to the Light they cannot see.

Again the Shining Guide took the Master's hand and led him once more to the mountain top.

"Now you shall choose the time and the place. Before you stretches the work of the gods, the path that you have earned and great labors to be performed. The shining robe of glory is here for you to don and the peace that passes human understanding will guide you in your wanderings among the stars. Behind you lies the path that you have trod, the

broken cries of agony which you have earned the right to hear no more. Here upon the threshold, now, shall you name the way you wish to go."

The Master stood, his eyes turned upward towards the Light which he had served so long in darkness and whose heavenly gleam he had so often prayed to behold. Longingly he sought to spread his wings and fly straight to its source. His soul longed to be bathed eternally in its glory and to climb the steps to the Light that shines behind each star. Still gazing upward, he felt fingers pulling at his heartstrings, feeble hands reaching up from below; he heard the prayers of the suffering and a great chorus of voices united in prayer called unto him. He stood uncertain, undecided as to the way he should go. He saw the powers of Light shining down upon him—majestic faces framed in Light Divine. When he turned his glance downward into the gloom he looked into eyes blinded with sorrow, into hearts broken with despair, into hands red with blood. At last he turned again to the Shining One, his face strong with a divine resolve. Quickly he stripped from his being the robe of Light and donned again the garments of the world.

"I cannot go on," he cried, his voice choked with tears, "others must do that. The voices that whisper in the darkness below call unto my soul. Hands weak with suffering are clutching feebly at my heart. I must go back to work again and give to them the little hope that I have found. Others must be found to wear the golden robes; I shall return to the garments of mortality. And turning to his Guide he said, "Brother, lead me again into the shadows I have left, break again the seals of the book that was completed, for I am going back to the despairing ones left behind."

And without another word he who might have been a Master turned and walked softly down the path that led into dark-

ness. Looking back he saw the Shining One standing alone on a pinnacle of rock, His hands clasped in prayer.

Slowly the glorious Light faded from the heavens, the fluttering wings ceased to sound and the music of the spheres changed to the broken notes of human discord. At last the final gleam from the mountain vanished in the night. The soul again stood in the muck and mire of earth.

While he stood there the darkness parted and a shaft of golden sunbeams shone from the heavens above, and a great Form, with spreading wings which seemed to obscure the very heavens and to extend unto the end of the firmament spoke, while he, who might have been a Master bowed before Him, raising hands dark with the stains of the world. The voice from the Shadow welled forth in thunderous tones:

"All ye angels of the heavens rejoice! All ye powers of creation rejoice; ye heaven-born Sons of the Eternal, rejoice! For from the clay of earth there hath been fashioned another soul immortal! From now on the earth that ye mold shalt not cling to thee and though thou walkest through the valley of the shadow thou shalt be in the Light and my staff shalt comfort thee. All ye hosts of eternal day, acclaim thy brother. All ye Spiritual Powers of the universe, behold one who is to serve with thee! For there be none greater in all the world, than he who giveth his life for his friends, and none greater than he who counts as his friends the children of earth. Mark ye all who liveth in the Seven Heavens, this is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

At the same instant a bolt of glory descended from the Heavens and entered the soul of the new Master and the voice of the Lord spoke, saying:

"Behold I taketh up my dwelling in the temple of my



At the same instant a bolt of glory descended from the brooding form and entered the soul of the new Master. Again the voice of the Lord spoke, but this time from within.

children. I findeth one who hath built his dwelling place according to the Law. I hath found a Brother among my Sons and I, the living Father, hath returned to the world with him who is joyous in his labors. He hath turned back and hath been found worthy and I the Living God hath turned back with him to labor hand in hand for the glory of the Light we both shalt serve."

THE GLORY OF THE LORD

ALREADY the shadows of evening had descended and gathered in purple clouds in the valleys and over the great plains that stretched out to the foot of the lofty mountains, while the pale glimmer of a waning moon shone faintly over the edge of the hills. Amid the shadows of the plains a few lights gleamed dully in the evening air, while the night seemed thrilled with a hazy crimson glow.

It is hard for man's mind to form pictures of the past, but to those who think, all things are possible and the mystic can build again with the powers of imagination the great encampment at the base of the Sacred Mountain. Stretched over the plain, row upon row, the tents of the Israelites show faintly in the dim shadows, while the Tabernacle in the center is outlined by the crimson cloud which floats over its Holy Place, the Shekinah Glory, the presence of the Lord.

Already the Children of Israel, the chosen people of the world, had wandered long in the wilderness; but bivouacked for the night the roving hearts seemed to rest at last under the purple mantle of the enclosing hills. Down among the tents where the Twelve Tribes slept all was silence and darkness, except where a tiny light gleamed from a tent formed of the skins of animals, a rude covering which seemed to shelter but a single inmate.

Inside of the rough and none too secure structure sat a Jewish youth. On his face was a look of great expectancy, and his heart was aflutter in his breast. This youth was about to set out on his great adventure. As he sat waiting for the moment of safety, he tried to exonerate himself and prove the worthiness of his cause to a heart which, in spite of himself and his desires, whispered that all was not well.

"Why," he thought, "should I not be as worthy as another to enter the Holy Place? Long have I and my people followed the orders of the priest; for years we have wandered in the wilderness and I do not see that we have gained any great result. I myself will enter the Holy Place of the Most High and there will listen to the words of my God, if in truth a God be there, which oftentimes I doubt."

Thus he reasoned out, in his own mind and in his own humble way, the workings of God and the plan of human destiny.

"What right have the priests to say that all cannot enter the presence of God, that all men are not truly equal, and that they, being priests, are chosen?" he asked himself. "If we are all the children of God and Jehovah guides and guards us all, why may we not all know Him and enter His presence unafraid? At least I shall do so in spite of priests or punishment!"

So saying he rose silently and, slipping out from his frail shelter, crept among the tents, his bare feet making no sound on the soft earth.

At last the gloomy walls of the Tabernacle enclosure loomed before him, the great curtains hanging from posts that gleamed dully with their golden plates. Noiselessly he stole along the side walls like a ghost, until at last he reached the entrance of the first court, and there in spite of himself he hesitated. Be-

fore him was visible the Altar of Burnt Offerings, its corners adorned with the horns of bulls and of rams. Even in the partial moonlight he could see the dark stains upon the Altar where but a few days before had been offered up the first-born of the flock. The staves were still in their loops. As he stopped for an instant beside the Altar a peculiar feeling came over him. He almost feared to go on. It seemed that hands were holding him back and that into his ears lips whispered words of warning, but with the thoughtlessness of youth he shook them all off and passed like a silent spectre through the darkened courtyard.

Before him another mystic shape arose, and by the pale light of the Shekinah Glory, which flickered in rosy shadows over the Ark and its coverings, the youth saw before him the Laver of Purification which glittered faintly, its sides encrusted with the mirrors of the women of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. He thought the mighty bowl tried to move out of its way to stay his progress; but he steadily continued on his way. Then the tent of the Tabernacle itself, shrouded beneath its many coverings, arose before him.

A great oppression weighed upon the adventurer's heart. It seemed that a wall had been built between him and this sacred place. But flinging off, with a mighty effort, the tiny fingers of negation, the youth raised the blue and crimson curtain and entered the Holy Place.

The first room of the Tabernacle was aglow with a soft light shed from the mighty candlestick whose seven branches, with their dimly gleaming oil lamps and the seventy-seven blossoms twined around their golden pillars, rose far above the head of the youth and seemed to fill the entire chamber with warmth and power. Standing uncertain, he gazed in admiration and awe at the furnishings of this mystic apartment.

Across the room from the candlestick stood the table with the shewbread, a thin pencil of incense smoke still rising from the crest of one of the stacks of loaves. Before him was the Altar of Burnt Incense where an offering acceptable to the Most High burned eternally in the dish of chased gold. From the heavy coverings of the walls the faces of numberless cherubs gazed down upon the scene, while among the rafters and draperies of the peaked roof strange forms seemed to shape themselves in the incense patterns that hovered near the ceiling. The soft sand beneath the adventurer's feet seemed to reel and sway dizzily, while the youth kneeled in prayer, overcome in spite of himself by a Power unexplainable. But he resolved to persevere to the end; so slowly and unsteadily he tottered towards the veil behind the misty folds of which Jehovah dwelt.

Reaching the curtain he hesitated for an instant more, then quickly drawing it aside, he half stumbled into the Holy of Holies. When the curtain fell again behind him he realized that he was in utter darkness. Not even a glow from the candlestick entered here. Staring into the gloom, he saw a strange shape outline itself faintly in phosphorescent light and crimson tint. He knew well what that shape was—the mighty chest, on it the kneeling cherubim, between whose outstretched wings dwelt the Spirit of the Lord.

In spite of himself he fell again on his knees in adoration, overcome by the strange sense of majesty and sanctity which filled the apartment. As he knelt he suddenly beheld a thin stream of blue light shoot like an electric spark between the kneeling cherubim and the pendent onyx stones around their necks. A strange, crackling, spitting sound broke the silence, and the room was illuminated by lurid flashes.

Uttering a frenzied cry the youth sought to escape, but the power of motion had left him. With his breath coming in

short gasps, his heart nearly bursting within him, he was forced to watch a scene ineffable.

Gradually the Ark of the Covenant was shrouded in a rosy, golden light. Each ray seemed thrilled, and instead of being merely a man-made box, this sacred chest seemed a living receptacle of ever-changing fire. A great billowy cloud appeared over the Mercy Seat. This cloud grew denser and denser until it nearly obscured the plate of solid gold which marked the resting place of the Spirit of Jehovah. Then, dimly through this pillar of haze, there descended a globe of orange light which resembled the copper of the setting sun, a mass of gleaming fire. From the great firey globe there poured two streamers of wing-like light, which swayed and fluttered among the clouds. The youth's face was colored by the copper light and his eyes almost burst from their sockets. Slowly this great globe of light descended, filling the entire room with a resplendent glory, while from it poured showers of living sparks. A buzzing, droning hum beat upon the air as Jehovah descended and hung a gleaming globe of fire between the wings of the Cherubim.

At the same instant a Voice spoke from the midst of the globe of light, a thunderous voice which shook and thrilled the very walls until they seemed ready to collapse.

"Wouldst thou speak to Jehovah, Lord God of Isreal?"

"No! No!" screamed the youth. "But one thing I ask thee, God! Give me strength to leave Thy presence!"

Again the Voice thundered from the midst of the cherubim and a Hand, formed out of living Light, reached from the globe of flame.

"No! No!" cried the youth, as the Hand beckoned him to come forward, "I dare not!"



A buzzing, droning hum seemed to beat upon the air as Jehovah descended and hung as a gleaming globe of fire between the wings of the Cherubim.

"If thou darest not meet thy God, why camest thou here?" spoke the Voice from the Mercy Seat.

"Oh, God, I know not!" sobbed the youth gazing down for the first time. From head to foot he was a mass of flame. He sought to flee, but could not move; he sought to cry, but his lips no longer spoke. He could only look at the shooting flames which, coming from the globe, bathed him in a fire that burned to his very soul.

By degrees he sank to the ground, his eyes still fastened on the wondrous winged globe of shining light which, never quiet, never still, an eternal seething mass of colored radiance, played back and forth, up and down, between the wings of the kneeling Cherubim, whose many heads all faced the Spirit of Jehovah.

Little by little the lights faded and, in a blaze of glory, the Spirit of God with His trailing wings of silver light rose through the ceiling, leaving behind His empty throne. Darkness again filled the Holy of Holies, and no sound broke the silence of Israel's sleep save murmuring voices of the night.

* * *

The next morning the High Priest, in his linen robes, entered the Temple of his Lord, and there, dead at the foot of the altar, he found the body of a Jewish youth. The flesh was burned and its garments had been scorched and singed. As the priest bowed before the Ark to ask humbly the reason of this, a Voice spoke from between the onyx stones. But the room was no longer filled with the dazzling light. Only a mellow radiance enveloped the priest; the globe no longer shed a fiery brilliance but only a soft flame which illumined and glorified the noble face of God's messenger among men.

As the High Priest knelt in prayer the Voice spoke again,

no longer in thundering tones, but rather with tender and musical cadence:

"Behold the one who hath violated the sacredness of the Tabernacle! Behold one who hath entered the Holy of Holies without purification! Call the Children of Israel, the Children of the Twelve Tribes whom I hath led out of the land of darkness. Carry this body to the gates of the Tabernacle and speak unto them the words which I shalt say for thee. Think not of what thou art to speak, for Jehovah the Lord God of Israel will speak to His children through thee this day."

The priest bowed, his snowy beard touching the fine linen of his robes, and rising he went forth calling unto the priests of the Tabernacle. They gathered the Children of the Twelve Tribes, and laying the body on a litter, the priests came out with it from the porch of the Holy Place and robed in the garments of glory the High Priest spoke unto them the words of Jehovah, the Lord God of Israel:

"Behold one who hath profaned the Tabernacle! Behold one who wouldst speak with his God uncleansed, and behold the vengeance of the Lord! Knowest ye not this is hallowed ground whereon ye tread? Knowest not that this is the Temple of the Living God? Therefore if ye know, sanctify thyself according to the laws of Moses. If ye knoweth not, hear now the word of thy God.

"Behold the Altar of Burnt Offerings! On this altar must ye make the living sacrifice of thy body which art acceptable in mine eyes. Hath ye not seen the Laver of Purification? In this laver must ye bathe not the body but the spirit and the soul; thou shalt be cleansed in my living water. Behold the tables of the shewbread whereon ye offer up the loaves of thy works which I must leaven! Behold the candlestick made as

I hath ordered; but ye must make the seven lights to shine with the glory of thine own oil. Behold the Altar of Burnt Incense where daily thy words art offered up to the glory of thy Lord! *Only then, when thou hast cleansed thy body and thy soul, mayest thou enter the Presence of thy Lord and Master.* Only then canst thou bow before My glory, for I, the Lord God of Israel, am a Great Light and a Consuming Fire. For the pure of heart I lighteth the way, but forever I burneth the impure; and if thou enterest into my Presence unpurified I wilt burn thee and wilt leave but ashes and stone. But if thou be purified after the laws of Moses and Aaron I wilt illumine thy soul and be a Light unto thy feet. My golden Light is for the pure of heart, and my crimson Fire is for the dross.

“So it is written in the Law which I gaveth unto the Children of Men amidst the clouds of Sinai. Only the pure of heart shalt see the God of Israel and live. And behold, this is my Living Tabernacle where I hath made my pact with the children of men. Behold! This is my High Priest who standeth between me and the children of my heart, for were it not for him and the shining jewels upon his breast I could speak unto my children but as a Consuming Fire. See and know the price to be paid by those who seek their God without following the laws that He hath set: who hath sought to enter into the Sacred Place without the Light of their own purified souls.

“Know that the Lord God of Israel hath spoken in the hearts of men and shalt protect thee under the shelter of His wings, but seek not to behold His face nor to know His way until ye hath garbed yourselves in the garments of purification and hath brought the blood of thine offerings to sprinkle on the Mercy Seat.

“Jehovah, the Lord God of Israel, hath spoken. Let it be heard.”

THE LAST OF THE SHAMANS

An American Indian Allegory



THE majority of the white race know little if anything of the American Indian, of his ideals, his hopes and fears, for there are few indeed who can pierce the stoic attitude of these people who, while they are fast dying, still preserve the dignity and self-control which mark all the elder nations.

From early childhood I mingled more or less with this strange, broken people, a scattered remnant of what was once the most powerful of all races. There is something very wonderful and fascinating in the study of the Indian. An invisible cord, a mystic bond, drew me even in my childhood to these nomadic people, and I spent many years in the study of their customs. I have seen young braves dashing madly on half broken broncos and Indian ponies down the main street of a town, covered from head to foot with yellow ochre or green and blue aniline dye, shouting and screaming their war-cries in a truly terrible, yet wonderfully fascinating manner. I have stood beside tall, blanketed figures in the drugstores as they spent the money gained from horse selling and cattle raising for various colored pigments with which to smear their bodies. I have stood on the street corner where the squaws sat, surrounded by pottery and bead work fashioned by their skillful fingers, crying out the value of their wares or cooing

cradle songs to the little papooses fastened by thongs to their beds of wood.

Of white men there are but few who concern themselves as to the fate of the Indians. The pale-face can scarcely be blamed for he does not know the beauty, the sweetness and the deep mysticism of their ancient but now broken ideals. Every race, like every individual, plays its part in the great plan, and its work done, vanishes from the sight of men. In his soul the Indian knows that the course of his race is run, and while his heart is sad still the voice within whispers and the old brave realizes that the Great Spirit is calling his children home from the corners of creation. Calmly and serenely the aged warrior, philosopher or statesman gathers the folds of his blanket around him and walks along the way that leads to Manitou the Mighty.

It was in a small town in the western states that I met probably the strangest Indian in the world. He always reminded me of that wonderful character created by Eugene Sue in "The Wandering Jew," for it honestly seemed that this Indian had lived forever. Nobody knew where Uncle Joe came from, but some of the old-timers remarked that they guessed God made him with the country. Every one agreed that he was more than a hundred, but no one seemed to know just how much more and he never answered personal questions. When you asked him, he would only grunt and wrap his blanket more closely about his face. There were very few people who were friendly with Uncle Joe, for he was a strange, lonely wanderer, reminiscent of the age when the Red Man was in his glory. He still wore the picturesque garb of his people; his face was wrinkled and copper-colored, and his heart was of pure gold.

He was no fool, either, was Uncle Joe, nor was he lacking in education, for he spoke better English than the white men

who scorned him. It seemed he had traveled widely, also, for he could tell you of distant countries, and he spoke a dozen or more foreign languages. A polished gentleman in temperament and nature, he seemed a strange misfit among a rabble of half-breeds. Some said he was a great chief, others that he was the medicine man for a once mighty people, while the eternally suspicious ones whispered that he was a secret agent for the government. But when it came right down to facts, all admitted that they did not know anything about Uncle Joe.

Every few weeks he would mount his little Indian pony and ride out all alone into the barren desert dotted with mesas and shapeless crags which lay to the south of the town. Everyone wondered where he went and often tried to follow him. They would get just so far, however, each time, and then he would vanish as though the earth had swallowed him up, and no one had ever found the secret which Uncle Joe guarded somewhere out among the painted rocks.

I lived in the little town many months, studying the Indian, and my love and admiration for his race must have been felt by Uncle Joe, for he became very friendly with me and we had many talks about the Red Man, his history, his government and his philosophy. Uncle Joe was no ordinary Indian, as I have intimated, but a real scientist and philosopher.

In the course of about three years I became his closest companion. We were together nearly all the time except when he went out into the desert. Then he would say:

"I go into the hills. Some day I shall take you with me, but not now."

So the time passed and I learned much of the history of the Red Man, his secret customs, his religion and his great ideals. Uncle Joe would sigh as he told me of the dead ambitions of

his race and now and then a tear would steal softly down his cheek when he spoke of the way of the Great Spirit and of the gods who had come to care for and instruct his people.

One day as the third year of our acquaintance was drawing to a close, Uncle Joe laid his hand on my shoulder and his great black eyes seemed to look into my very soul.

"I am going out into the desert," he said; "and I shall never come back again, for my gods have called me and my father's fathers have whispered to me in the night. In all the years that have passed I have never taken anyone with me on this journey, but today my gods have spoken and said that one at least of the coming race should know the secret of my dying people. So if you wish to go with me out into the desert, you may, and there you will discover the reason why Uncle Joe has been here all these years and why no man has ever followed him."

I gladly accepted the opportunity, for I knew that there was some great secret that the old Indian had been guarding; and so the next morning we started out together on two little pinto ponies towards the broken ground which lay to the south.

As we rode along, Uncle Joe told me some wonderful things about the Indians; some of them I am not allowed to tell, but others I may relate. He said that among the Red Men was a mystic body who for thousands of years had kept the records of these wandering people. Little was known concerning them; they were hidden from even the Indians themselves, for they were a secret order appointed by the Great Spirit to labor with his children. This little band of Sacred Ones had come from the silent East, from the place of the rising sun. They came from a wondrous city of shining lights that had vanished forever beneath the waters of the mighty ocean.

They were the priests of Malkedek, the priest-kings of the ancient Red Men, arrayed in robes of birds' feathers and shining gold, possessors of the wealth of emperors and the wisdom of gods. These strange masters had brought out of the dawn land the knowledge of the Great Spirit and had formed the Indians into seven great nations like the planets in the heavens. For thousands of years these wise men had labored with the Indians, who before that time had been a nomadic race dwelling on the outskirts of a more ancient civilization. They had brought with them along the path of the sunbeam the great serpent of wisdom and had guarded the Red Man's destiny all through the years of his development. But now the Red Man's work was done, the Manu was calling his people, and the Great Spirit had given to his sons the work of gathering in his broken tribes as the harvester gathers in his grain.

I listened while the old man spoke. It was all very wonderful to me to hear such words as these from the mouth of one whom the world called a savage, yet I realized more plainly than ever that the world has little power to judge as to who are its philosophers.

We had been riding some time, and slowly the rough walls rose up about us, bearing the marks of water on their rough-hewn sides, showing that once a mighty ocean had carved them by its ebb and flow. But now all was dry and dead, and here and there the whitened bones of animals showed that water was but a memory of the past. We were on a narrow trail that wound in and out among the reddish rocks and shifting sands.

Suddenly before us rose a mighty pinnacle of sandstone, and the twisting path seemed to end at its base. The aged Indian stopped, raised his hand and muttered a few words in his strange, guttural language, at the same time making the mark

of the cross upon his forehead. As he did so the rocks dissolved and a gateway appeared in the mighty sandstone mountain. Motioning me to enter the mystic arch, Uncle Joe followed. Darkness surrounded us, for the rock door closed behind us leaving no mark upon the outer wall.

"For many hundreds of years," whispered my companion, "this rocky cavern has remained unknown to the white man, for in it are buried the secrets of a lost people. There are few who know the mysteries of my race. Even the young brave growing up has forgotten and will never think again of the power of his sires."

I remained spellbound at the miracle, for I had never believed in supernatural things up to that time, but as we rode slowly along in the gloom a strange feeling of awe and reverence for my companion came over me.

"Who are you," I asked, "who have these strange powers and know so much of these ancient people?" My guide made no answer, but we continued on through the gloom until we finally emerged into the light on a beautiful little plateau high upon the side of a lofty mesa.

From this vantage point we saw spread out below us a great expanse of rolling and uneven country which stretched out to the distant mountains a mass of brown and yellow in strange relief against the glorious blue of the summer sky.

The old Indian waved his hand.

"Behold the land of the Red Men, now a desert. Water alone made this a fertile country, and the waters of life pouring out from the heart of the Great Spirit alone made the Red Men a great race. No longer do the waters come forth, for the work of the Red Man is done and soon he will be as lifeless and broken as the desert which stretches before you. But

come, my son, child of another people; you are the first white man who has ever lived to enter the presence of the Red Man's God."

Taking me by the hand, Uncle Joe guided me to a small opening in the side of the cliff—just a narrow slit which led into unknown depths. I passed in and the Indian followed me. After going a hundred feet or so into the mountain the crevice broadened out and became a great room dimly lighted by a blazing fire of mighty logs. Of living inmates there was no sign, but the whole room was filled with ghostly figures. In a great circle sat a row of mummies robed from head to foot in the grandeur of the Red Man, preserved against decay by some unknown element in that subtle atmosphere. Twelve of them sat cross-legged upon the floor, and in the center of this ghostly circle was a great throne before which burned a fire of undying grandeur. The throne was empty and seemed of solid gold with a glorious sun-globe and the thunder bird carved upon its back.

"These, my son, are Chiefs of the Red Man. They were the last of the line of priest-kings who dwelt here and who came out of the land of the sky-blue waters. One by one they have passed beyond to the land of their ancestors. Each time one of these Great Ones died the power of the Manitou was cut off from a tribe of the Red Men. One after another they have been brought here, and in the heart of this mountain of red sandstone they sit, mute examples of faithfulness to the end. They were the Order of Malkedek, the Priest Sachems of the nomadic people of the world. Here you see all that is left of them, my son; their spirits have returned to the Great Father, for their work is done. Their children cry in the wilderness, for the Manu has called them and one by one they join that silent throng, passing over to the Blessed Isle. No longer can the hands of the gods lead them. They

are gathered in and taken over to another shore, whence some day they will come forth again a mighty people."

The old Indian leaned heavily on my arm while he was speaking, and slowly we went out again into the sunshine of the day. We sat down upon the ground near the edge of the cliff and talked for many hours. He told me of the past glories of his dying people and begged that some day I would reveal them to my world. The shades of evening fell and the short purple twilight that divides the day from the desert night hung over the plains and prairies that stretched out before us. The evening star arose, a glorious light in the heavens, and the whole world seemed to sleep save when the howl of a coyote broke the silence.

The old Indian pointed to the gathering clouds, whispering, "Look!"

While I did so a great procession seemed to form out of the mist and, crossing the sky in endless train, vanished where the last dull gleams marked the setting sun.

"They are the dying ones," whispered my companion, "and I am one of them. Each night as I sit alone or wander in the desert I can see my people passing slowly by. Long ago I buried my race, and out there in the desert only a few broken sticks mark their resting places. No longer does the smoke rise from their campfires, no longer do the wigwams dot the plains, never again will the Red Man hunt the bison, no more will he stand at sunrise on the mountain peak to worship the Great Spirit. See them, my son! See them! Chief and priest, brave and squaw, sweeping on in an endless file to the home of the gods. Just a few short years and they will be no more. Their work is done—why should they stay? Remember, my son, they go not like slinking coyotes in the night, like cowards creeping away from the field of battle;

they go like kings and emperors. They go not as failures to chastisement by their gods, but as those who have finished, claiming their rewards. The white man will never know the Red Man, for the white race has made us a stranger in the land of our birth, nameless vagabonds in the beautiful world created for us. But it is well, for as today the Red Man sinks away into the eternal night so shall the white man, when his day is done, pass silently to rest."

While he was speaking the endless procession swept across the sky. There were mighty chieftains in robes of wampum and with war bonnets of eagle feathers, braves on desert ponies, squaws and children, medicine men wearing the heads of buffaloes, and priests with their feathered staves—a ghostly file of spectres in triumphant march, all with heads up, shoulders erect, eyes to the front.

The old Indian beside me gazed longingly at the moving throng and pointed upward to the stars.

"Look, my son! My people's campfires are burning in the heavens!"

I followed his finger with my eyes, and I beheld in the sky millions of little campfires stretched out as far as the eye could see, millions of little tepees flowing in the ethers, and the dull murmur as of reverent prayer.

"That, my son," whispered the old Indian, "is the bivouac of the dead. I can see them every night; when the shades of evening fall the braves dash across the sky hunting buffalo or float in their beautiful canoes down the river of stars. Still again through the night there comes to me the plaintive wail of the moonlute as the Indian youth plays his love melodies, and I see the smoke of the signals on the hills and hear the ancient war drums booming. Once again the braves gather

to listen to the words of their Chieftains. It is all gone now, my son, but still it lives in the world of spirit, and there it is eternal. I am old, for I have lived since the Red Man was born; I was with him in the days of his youth; I was with him in the years of his glory, and one by one I have laid his wisest to rest. From the mighty land of the Sioux, from the tribes of the Algonquins, from the Muskhogean and the wandering Iroquois, even to the distant Shoshoneans, I am known. Each time that one of the Great Ones has died, it is I who in the silence of the night have walked from mountain top to mountain top with his body in my arms. I have brought him here to the cave of the Sandstone Mountain, in whose darkness my secret shall be locked forever. Never until the time when Manitou the Mighty shall roll away these mountains shall the twelve priests of Malkedek be found, for no white man shall desecrate them, no curious eyes shall behold their forms, no heathen laugh shall awaken their slumbers, no vandalizing grave-robbers shall in the name of science disturb their resting place. Your people may search through the seven worlds, but they will never find the secret of the Red Man, for passing silently into the Great Beyond he carries with him the truths of his creation.

“The years draw nigh when the end is at hand. I know, for I am the Spirit of the Red Man. None know where I came from, for I came not. I am. None know where I shall go, for I go not. I am. Each of my red brothers who is laid to rest has knowledge of me; I feel his presence and part of my soul joins with his. One by one they pass away, the young braves live other lives, and the Red Man is forgotten. Now the twelve are all here, for in the silence of the night I brought the last. My people shall wander for a little while upon the earth, but their spirit is gone, gone back across the great waters to the Father to wait until the appointed day when they shall

come forth again on other wheels as new nations. Now the Red Man is ruled by the spirit of the white man, and he bows to the white man's God. It is well, for all things are the will of the Great Spirit and the Father of Fathers whose home is by the Great Waters where He watches the tiny grains of sand that are dashed upon the seashore. But the Order of Malkedek is no more. A few scattered seekers there are among my people, but they wander in darkness, for in this cave is sealed forever the Order of the Kings."

The tears were rolling down my cheeks while he told his pathetic story, and yet it is a grand story, the story which is written in the soul of every Red Man unless his tired heart has found rest under the banner of the White King.

At last I spoke:

"You say you have lived through all the ages of the Red Man?"

The old warrior nodded his head.

"I have lived with them and, my son, I shall die with them, for they are my chosen people. I came to them with the glory of the sun as it rose a ball of fire from the silent waters; I fought with them through the storms of winter and loved with them through the calm of summer; and now that the sun of the Red Man is sinking and the last of the vanishing race is being led silently to rest, I go with them. Their sun will rise some day in a distant land, and there I shall be once more the Spirit of the Sunrise as now I am the over-brooding Angel of the Night. This is the message of the Red Men—a people who in the years that are past ruled the world, whose libraries and universities were the glory of creation, whose scientists were the marvels of men, whose domed temples and mystic arches rose to the skies in every land on earth.

"Listen! A voice calls from within. It is the voice of the ages, for the pyramid builders speak through me this night, the Pharaohs of Egypt are still alive in my blood, the phantom of the Manu, he, too, is with me, and in my soul is the heart of the dying Montezuma. Amid the Andes, through the mystic caverns of the Sierra Madres, among the Everglades that border the shores of Okechobee, along the silent Nile where the great stone faces gaze peacefully through the night I wander, and I am one with them. Yes, I am the Spirit of the Red Men. You ask who I am. That has been asked before. Once I answered, 'I am the Morning Star.' Later I replied, 'I am the Star that shines with the glory of the Sun.' Still later as my people sank to rest I was the Evening Star that whispered of eternal peace. Now I am the Spirit of the Night, and you may call me Silent Voice, for I speak and there are none to hear my words. I am the last of the Shamans, the last of the priest-kings who came out of the lost Atlantis; I am the last who was ordained in the Temple of the Rising Sun; I am the last to bear the mark of the serpent."

While speaking he dropped his blanket, and there over his heart and twined upward across his chest was a strange serpent tattooed in vivid pigments.

"That is the mark of Malkedek," he whispered, "a mark no living man knows from one end of the world to the other. It is the mark of Quetzalcoatl, the mark of the feathered serpent who is dead forever. I am the last living thing to bear that mark which was placed there four million years ago."

I stared at the Indian as if doubting his words, but looking into those terrible eyes of living fire I realized that I was not gazing at a man but at a god.

"Wait a few minutes," he whispered, rising, "then come

back into the cave, for there are other things I would that you should know."

He left me looking up at that endless procession of figures that still crossed the skies as silently as the stars in their courses. I waited for several seconds, and then a voice whispered to me to rise and enter.

As I did so I gave a startled cry. On the great throne surrounded by the twelve dead sat the aged Indian we knew as Uncle Joe! He was robed from head to foot in the garb of the Red Man, covered with jeweled ornaments and the finest wampum. His bronze body shone in the flickering light of the ever-burning fire, and his war bonnet of eagle feathers reached nearly to the floor. On his forehead was a cross of living gold, and from his breast the snake gleamed forth in varicolored lights while the feathered staff he carried as a sceptre swayed slightly with the movement of his arms.

"My son, the last of the Red Men, the last of the priests, has been called to rest. They were my kingdom, and now I am an emperor of the dead. You will see me no more, for I go to the Land of the Setting Sun; the Manitou has called me and I obey. But remember, there is no death. I go on to other labors in other lands, for I am the Spirit of the Red Man and I can never die but shall live on forever to guard the destinies of my people who, while their race is broken, must continue their endless pilgrimage through space until the day when the All-Father calls home even Manitou the Mighty. Somewhere in the bounds of the infinite we shall meet again, you and I, for you, too, are chosen of your gods. When your race is drawn silently into the unknown, I shall ask the Manitou the privilege of being there that I may greet another people coming home. The fire that has burned for ages will soon go out, and with it vanishes the last of the Red Men. No

more will the world see me, for on this throne I sit awaiting the last of my people. Though years may pass before they gather, I shall be sitting here, surrounded by the dead.

“So as you go out into the world and people ask you what has happened to Uncle Joe, just tell them he is waiting—waiting through the hours of the night, waiting with the jury of the dead, waiting for the last log to burn. In the ages that are past I said that I would become strong and worthy to be given charge of the Red Men. In many worlds and for many ages I have fulfilled that trust, even until today. So here I shall wait in the cave, for the time is not long. Already the Great Spirit is calling me from somewhere over the distant hills, and even while I speak another Red Man’s soul passes me on the way to rest. I wait as some time you must wait for the whispers of the dying. Here I remain until the last great day, when I shall seal the book of my works and return to my Maker. Farewell. You have heard my words. Never seek me again, for no man shall know where I have gone. But remember that my spirit waits in the silence of this cave in the heart of the Sandstone Mountain. When they come I shall gather them lovingly to rest, and then with the spirit of the twelve priests of Malkedek I shall go before my Creator with the glory of a million emperors, the power of kings, and the light of the Rising Sun and the Serpent of Wisdom—I, whom the world knows only as Uncle Joe: the last of a dying race, the last of the Red Men.”

